**Mornington Community Gardens**

**Health & Safety Policy**

*Approved: 1 December 2023*

*Revision: December 2024*

**Commitment**

The Mornington Community Garden promotes a culture where health, safety and wellbeing are considered in everything we do.

We will actively identify and assess hazards and implement and review strategies to eliminate or mitigate risks to our members and visitors.

**Responsibility**

Safety is everyone’s responsibility.

The Committee provides direction, resources and support for the members’ health, safety and wellbeing.

**Consultation**

Health safety and wellbeing issues will be addressed by the Committee in consultation with members.

Our Health and Safety Policy is implemented and reviewed through a consultative process.

**Health & Safety Issues and Risks**

Gardening is a relaxing and enjoyable form of exercise, but it can pose health risks.  If you’re careful, you can enjoy the benefits of your garden in good health.

Ignoring safety precautions and using the wrong tool for the job are common causes of gardening injuries.

**Managing Risks~~/~~ and Risk Audits**

Keeping the Garden risk free and managing risks is the responsibility of all members.

The Committee will carry out hazard identification / risk audits annually and following an incident.

Members identifying hazards or potential hazards can complete a ‘Safety Suggestion Form’ and hand it to a committee member.  Safety Suggestion Forms are located on the notice board.

All hazards will be investigated by the Committee and reported back through their meetings.

**Reporting Injuries and Incidents**

An Accident / Incident Form is to be completed for all injuries and incidents where first aid was required, or a dangerous incident occurs that needs consideration by the Committee.

Incidents must be reported to a committee member.  The Committee will risk assess each incident.  Incidents (no names) and responses will be recorded in the Committee meeting minutes.

**Emergency Contacts Sheet**

In an emergency there is a sheet with information on the outside of the clubrooms.

* **If there is a serious incident call 000 (or try 112 for mobiles)**
* Nurse On Call 1300 60 60 24
* Poison Information Centre on 13 11 26

**First Aid**

The First Aid Kit is located in the undercover area near the kitchen, it is stocked with basic supplies and will be maintained by the health and Safety Officer of the Committee.

**Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) in the undercover area near the kitchen**.

Automated external defibrillators (AEDs) can be used by anybody in an emergency.

A defibrillator is a device that uses electricity to re-start the heart or shock it back into its correct rhythm.  It is used when someone has a sudden cardiac arrest.  This is when the heart suddenly stops pumping.

The defibrillator analyses the heart rhythm and decides whether an electric shock is needed.

They won’t give the person an electric shock unless it’s necessary, so you can’t harm someone by using an AED.  It gives instructions through each step of the process.

Giving the person **immediate**  [cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)](https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/how-to-perform-cpr)  and using an AED early on can greatly increase their chances of survival.

***The most important thing is to use the AED quickly.***

Use a defibrillator whenever CPR is needed.  A person needs CPR if they are unresponsive and not breathing normally.  It can save someone’s life if they have a cardiac arrest.

The sooner you use a defibrillator, the greater the person’s chances of survival.

Dial triple zero (000) and ask for an ambulance if someone has had a cardiac arrest.

Remember, time is crucial. If someone is unresponsive and not breathing:-

1. call an ambulance on triple zero (000),
2. start CPR and
3. use a defibrillator as soon as possible.

Anyone can use an AED.  The device will tell you what to do.  AEDs must be used in conjunction with CPR.

Make sure the area around the person is clear.

Don’t touch the person while you are using the AED because this could interfere with how it reads the person’s heart.

If necessary, the AED will tell you where to put electrodes (pads) on the person’s body.

The device may deliver more than 1 shock.  The AED may instruct you to continue CPR after the shock.  Continue CPR until the ambulance arrives and a paramedic takes over.

**Health and Allergies**

Members are to work within their own capacity and not work beyond their limits.

*Note – please be aware we often share morning tea.  If you do have a food allergy, please supply your own food.*

What should I do if someone is experiencing anaphylaxis?

* “Anaphylaxis is the most severe type of allergic reaction.
* It can happen after exposure to certain triggers including foods, bites and stings or medicines.
* Symptoms of anaphylaxis include difficulty breathing, swelling of the throat and collapse.
* If someone is having anaphylaxis, use an adrenaline autoinjector (if available), call triple zero (000) and ask for an ambulance.
* Anaphylaxis develops rapidly and can be fatal, so should it always be treated as a medical emergency.
* If anaphylaxis progresses, it can lead to a dangerous drop in [blood pressure](https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/what-is-a-healthy-blood-pressure). This is known as ‘anaphylactic shock’.
* The symptoms of an allergic reaction will vary from person to person. They also depend on the type of allergen and where it entered the body (for example, eaten, applied to the skin or inhaled).
* This immune response can affect many different body systems, including the [skin](https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/skin), [digestive system](https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/digestive-system) and most dangerously, the [respiratory](https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/respiratory-system) or [circulatory](https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/circulatory-system)

***First aid for anaphylaxis:-***

1. Lay person flat and keep them still — do not let them stand or walk.
2. If they are unconscious, place them in the [recovery position](https://stjohn.org.au/assets/uploads/fact%20sheets/english/Fact%20sheets_recovery%20position.pdf).
3. If breathing is difficult or they are vomiting, allow them to sit with legs outstretched, but not to stand or walk.
4. Inject an [adrenaline autoinjector](https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/how-to-use-an-adrenaline-autoinjector-epipen-anapen) if one is available.
5. Call triple zero (000) and ask for an ambulance.
6. Further adrenaline doses may be given if there’s no response after 5 minutes.
7. Transfer the person to hospital for at least 4 hours of observation.

If the person is unresponsive and not breathing normally, start [CPR](https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/how-to-perform-cpr).

If the person also has asthma, give the adrenaline autoinjector **first** and then the asthma reliever puffer.”

**Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health**

If you’re doing it a little tough right now, you can call: –

* Lifeline – 131114
* Beyond Blue – 1300 224 636
* MensLine Australia – 1300 789 978
* Suicide Call Back Service – 1300 659 467
* Kids Helpline – 1800 551 800
* Headspace – 1800 650 890
* Domestic Violence – 1800 737 732

**Site Induction**

**Members are to complete a site induction as part of the membership process.**

**Manual Handling**

Each member should be aware of their own capacity to carry out tasks, lift and carry weights and push and pull wheelbarrows and trolleys.

We have a four-wheel trolley, which is very easy to use and ideal for moving heavy items to and from plots.

When lifting the following procedure should be used:

* Assess weight.
* Ensure clear passage to carry.
* Bend your knees not your back.
* Keep spine straight.
* No twisting or side bending.
* Keep weight close to the body.
* Ask for assistance.

**Weeding**

* Bend from the knees, not the back.
* Work in a kneeling position, if possible. Cushion mats can be placed under knees.
* Long handled hoes and weeding tools allow working from a standing position.
* Watch where the free hand is placed if using tools to remove weeds.
* Be cautious of objects near eyes.
* Change position regularly to minimise strains in joints.
* Vary the tasks to prevent repetitive strains injuries.
* Long handled forks and shovels can apply extra leverage and reduce back strain.

**Moving Mulch**

* Check that others are clear of the area when using a shovel or fork to fill a wheelbarrow with mulch.
* Position the wheelbarrow when filling from the mulch pile to minimise the need for twisting your back.
* Use a mask to prevent inhaling dust, fungal spores and other pathogens.
* Alternate the tasks of loading wheelbarrows / moving the mulch / spreading the mulch to minimise repetitive strain.

**Tools and Equipment**

***Do not operate MCG power tools or machinery or equipment unless you have been inducted to do so. Make yourself familiar with all the operating instructions and any PPE that is required.***

Familiarise yourself with the operating instructions before operating equipment.

* Always use appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the task.
* Always select and use the appropriate tool and equipment to suit the task.
* Always check your surrounds before using a tool or operating equipment.
* Minimise tripping hazards associated with your task, (cables, placement of tools, hoses, etc.).
* Don’t leave equipment or tools unattended.
* Use signage or bollards to alert others that equipment is being used in the area.
* Weather could play a part in operating equipment safely.
* Put tools and equipment away and clean up after task.
* Tools and equipment must be maintained in a safe working condition.
* Tools and equipment that become broken, loose, cracked, blunt or have parts missing must be reported to the Committee via the Communications book for repair or replacement. Place a ‘DO NOT OPERATE’ tag on the affected item.
* There may be welding, friction cutting and grinding in progress DO NOT enter the workshop while this activity is undertaken.

**Hazardous Material and Chemicals**

There are hazardous material and chemicals used and stored in the Garden.  For example: cleaners, detergents, soil additives, potting mix and adhesives.  Each product will be stored in appropriate containers and labelled.  It is easy to forget that common cleaning product can also be a harmful chemical substance if an accident occurs.

Whether a high or low risk hazard you must:

* Be aware of the hazard associated with the product you are about to use.
* Read mixing instructions and safety warnings on labels for that product.
* Always use appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the task.

**Storage**

There are designated areas such as sheds that are used to store materials in the Garden.

When storing: –

* Store valuable equipment in locked sheds.
* Stack, store and hang up tools and materials neatly so that they are easily accessible and safe.
* Always keep walkways clear. Do not block doorways.
* Place heavier material close to the ground.
* Avoid storing dangerous material in the Garden plots.

**Trips and Falling Hazards**

Please be aware of tripping hazards and watch where you walk.  Be particularly aware of: –

* garden bed edges with attachments such as nails or screws.
* garden beds with netting structures.
* gravel paths.
* garden tools in use by a member.
* uneven ground.
* overhanging plants.
* plant cuttings or pruning’s.
* uneven paving.
* hoses and electrical cords (when running across the ground).

If you identify a hazard, you complete a ‘Safety Suggestion Form’ and hand to a Committee member for review and action.

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

It is the personal responsibility of individual members to wear appropriate PPE for the task at hand.  This includes hats, gloves, masks, sunglasses, goggles, footwear, clothing and earplugs.

**Smoking and Vaping**

MCG is strictly a no smoking and no vaping area.  In the interests of others, please refrain from smoking or vaping within the garden area.

**Caring for Children**

We aim to create a child safe and child-friendly environment where children feel safe and have fun while participating in gardening activities with their families or carers or visiting as part of an education program.

Children are to be under adult supervision at all times.  Please ensure children’s toys and equipment are put away before leaving the Garden.  Educate children about any poisonous and dangerous plants in our Garden.

Refer to the Mornington Community Gardens Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy 2023

**Gate**

Be aware who is around and make yourself known to others in the Garden.  Ensure you lock the gate if you are the last person to leave the garden.

**Pets**

Pets should be on a leash at all times and under control by the owners.  If there is an incident with your pet – owner onus applies.  Please clean up and correctly dispose of pet droppings immediately.

**Signs**

There are signs around the Garden for your safety and directions.  Please make yourself aware of signs and follow them.  There may be other important notifications on the noticeboard located inside the undercover area.

**Stings and Bites**

* There are many creatures that call our Garden home, and many will try and defend themselves by biting or stinging. The best advice is to not interfere with them.
* Wear gloves while working in the Garden and take care before moving items that have been lying on the ground for a while, e.g., buckets, building material, bags of manure, garden stakes, mulch, etc.
* Advise a committee member if you sight creatures that are not usually in our Garden, e.g., swarming bees and especially wasp nests.
* If stung or bitten, try and identify the creature and if necessary, seek medical advice.
* Beware that wasps are becoming more common. They can be extremely aggressive if disturbed, sting and bite multiple times and can be lethal.

**Poisonous / Dangerous Plants**

* All members need to be aware of poisonous and dangerous plants that are grown within the Garden. Also be aware that there are food plants that are dangerous or have poisonous elements.  Inquisitive children will pick flowers, leaves and berries.  Please educate children and others of the dangers of certain plants in our Garden.
* Symptoms of poisoning include rashes, itching, vomiting, diarrhoea and stomach pains.
* Exposure to some plants may cause irritation to eyes, mouths and skin.

**If you suspect exposure to something poisonous or harmful, first aid measures include:**

* For skin contact – gently wash the skin with clear running water.
* For eye contact – irrigate the eye with clear running water for 20 minutes.
* For swallowed plants – remove any remaining plant pieces and wash out mouth.
* Phone **Nurse On Call -1300 60 60 24**
* Phone the **Poison Information Centre on 13 11 26** for further information.

If you need to go to hospital, take a piece of the plant with you if you can.

**If there is difficulty breathing, unconscious or fitting call 000 (or 112 mobile)**

**Heat Stress / Sunburn**

* Sun / Heat-related illness can be prevented.
* Keep cool, avoid vigorous physical activity in hot weather, and drink plenty of water. water can be obtained from the fridge in the kitchen. **Do Not Drink From the Purple Taps – these are treated water not for human consumption.**
* Take note of the weather forecast and minimise sun exposure during times of high UV on hot days.
* Slip, Slop, Slap, Seek, Slide
  + Slip on sun protective clothing.
  + Slop on SPF 30 (or higher) broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen
  + Slap on a broad-brimmed hat
  + Seek shade.
  + Slide on a pair of sunglasses.
* Take breaks and rest up in the shade.
* Never leave children or pets unattended in a parked car
* Look out for others. Seek medical assistance if a person shows any signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke.
* Heatstroke is a life-threatening emergency that can be avoided by following simple prevention measures.
* Older people, young children, pregnant or breastfeeding women, and people with chronic medical conditions such as heart disease, kidney disease and diabetes are most at risk.
* During hot weather, drink water, stay cool indoors or in the shade, and restrict activity (especially exercise, renovating and gardening).
* Call Triple Zero (000) if you or someone you are with shows any signs of heatstroke.

**Harassment and Bullying**

If problems / disputes occur between members, the Committee should be contacted to resolve the issue fairly.  Threats or abuse will not be tolerated.  Loud or rough behaviour prevents the enjoyment of others and must be avoided.

**Tools, especially knives left in plots**

For the safety of all, members are required to pack up and remove all tools, cutting implements, etc when finished working on their plots.

**Herbicides and Pesticides**

The Community Gardens strongly encourages all members to use non-chemical alternatives in and around your plots to control weeds, perceived pests and plant diseases.

Insecticides, fungicides and herbicides also harm the soil microbiome, which is essential in making nutrients available to plants and in breaking down organic matter.

Consider using natural remedies for slugs and snails such as beer traps, etc.

**Plastic**

When most common plastics break down, they not only form long term pollution, but disintegrate into microplastics, often containing toxins, where they end up in the food chain which humans and other organisms eat.   Members are urged not leave plastic to deteriorate on their plots or in the soil.

**Potting Mixes, Compost, etc.**

Can harbour pathogens (bugs that cause disease) if dust is breathed in. Take precautions when opening bags of commercial material and moving dry compost.

**Legionnaires disease**

“Legionnaires’ disease is an uncommon, severe, and sometimes life-threatening form of pneumonia, or lung inflammation, caused by *legionella* bacteria.

To prevent contamination with legionella that may be in soil and potting mix, follow the manufacturers’ warnings on potting mix labels, including:

* wet the potting mix to reduce the dust
* wear gloves and a mask
* wash your hands after handling potting mix or soil

People with Legionnaires’ disease usually get sick between 2 and 10 days after being infected.  The symptoms are similar to those of the [flu](https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/colds-and-flu).

It is important that you contact your doctor as soon as possible if you think that you have been exposed to *legionella bacteria*.

**Need Help Just Ask**

If you are fatigued, recovering from an illness or injury please ask another member for help

If you are unable to attend to your plot for any reason, please contact the Committee