

“The Habitat”

Community Native Plant Nursery

&

Community Garden

Santa Rosa Park

251 Quarry Road, Ryde

Procedures

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“The Habitat”

Community Native Plant Nursery and Garden

Long-term vision

To grow a vibrant community nursery and community garden, supported by the local council and community. The nursery will provide environmental education and local native plant species to the community that will encourage the creation of an extensive habitat network throughout Ryde and Hunter’s Hill. The community garden will build local community while growing edible plants in a safe and friendly environment.

Objectives

- To provide fun native flora and fauna oriented education for the local community.
- To build a happy and friendly growing community.
- To increase awareness of the role of the natural environment in our lives.
- To improve the function of the local natural environment.
- To extend the Habitat Network by providing an on-going source of local indigenous native plants to the residents of Ryde, Hunter’s Hill and other nearby areas for planting in their gardens and at bushcare and volunteer sites.
- To create native corridor connections between bushland areas.
- To actively demonstrate principles of sustainability such as food growing, restoration, reuse and recycle.
- To seek to fund all nursery needs through small membership contributions as required, fund raising, donations, sponsorship, grants and physical assistance by volunteers and Council.

- To network with the wider Ryde and Hunter's Hill communities including: community garden groups, Permaculture groups, Mars Inc (Cornucopia Nursery), FOM Environmental Education Centre, Habitat Network, Jimmy Shaw's schools vegetable garden project, community development and bushland management sections of both Ryde and Hunter's Hill Councils, business groups, schools, health groups, aged groups and other community groups.
- To run the community nursery and garden as a not-for-profit project with all incoming funds feeding back into developing the nursery and garden.
- To run the community garden as a shared plot garden where we all grow and share.

Insurance

International Environmental Weed Foundation (IEWF) is the umbrella organisation for the nursery and garden. IEWF will provide volunteer insurance, \$20 million public liability insurance and the ability to seek grants. City of Ryde is a partner in this project and will also provide appropriate cover.

For insurance cover all volunteers working at the nursery and garden and also all visitors to the nursery will sign on and off in the book provided. This will also provide a record of hours volunteered and activities undertaken for use when seeking and reporting on grants and other activities.

Members – Volunteers

All persons working in the nursery and garden **must be registered** as a **member of IEWF's Habitat Network**, so as to be covered by insurance.

All new volunteers and those attending for educational purposes will be required to register (using the registration folder) as a member of the Habitat Network by providing name, address, email address and phone number and indicate if they would like to be included on the emailing list.

All volunteers and visitors participating in nursery and garden activities will be required to sign in and sign out using a book which will be kept at The Habitat.

All who have worked at the nursery and garden are required to sign out – for safety reasons. And as appropriate a note should be made of the activities undertaken within the nursery and garden.

All new volunteers, prospective volunteers and visitors should be advised of the health and safety procedures for the nursery and garden and be supervised. Accredited volunteers can work unsupervised but would be required to co-ordinate their activities with someone from the management committee.

Accredited volunteers are those deemed by the management committee to work in a safe manner, follow instructions, work to the nursery and garden plan and seek guidance.

We aim to be inclusive however if anyone is disruptive or under the influence of drugs or alcohol they will be asked to leave – safely.

Fees (to take effect if required)

Regular Members will be asked to pay an annual fee of \$20 per year per family to help with paying for water and soil.

For Casual Members, a fee will be charged of \$5 to cover materials and they will be given some plants to take home to their garden to start a habitat area. These casual member fees may be converted to a full membership by paying the additional \$15.

Members will be eligible at no cost to attend all workshops and education sessions held at The Habitat – if they book in and space is available.

Some volunteers who find it hard to pay even these fees will be given membership at no cost at the discretion of the management committee.

Donations and Fund Raising

People volunteering and working in the community garden and also other visitors will be encouraged to make a gold coin donation whenever they visit to assist with fund raising for new facilities at the nursery and garden.

All significant donations and receipts of funds should be receipted, using the receipt book provided. IEWF is a registered not-for-profit Limited company and is on the Register of Environmental Organisations making all donations over \$2 tax deductible.

Sale of Plants

As City of Ryde is a partner in this project we are able to sell the native plants and surplus food plants that we grow. These funds will allow us to pay for soil, tubes, other supplies and new facilities as required. Prices will be set by the management committee.

Management

Initially a management committee will be setup to oversee the establishment of the project (Bev, Pam, a representative of City of Ryde and other nursery volunteers as invited). Once the nursery is firmly established this committee may become an elected body.

At the first anniversary of the establishment of the nursery the committee should review the structure, budget, fees and if appropriate arrange an election of the management committee for the following 12 months. Note, the official opening was 3rd November 2012.

A Director of IEWF (or a nominated representative) must be on the committee due to it providing the umbrella organisation; initially this is Bev Debrincat.

All **spending** (except for basic supplies), fund raising and policy decisions are to be agreed by the management committee. Spending on basic supplies is to be agreed by the nursery co-ordinators.

All nursery monies will be recorded and accounted for separately.

All **donations** over \$2 are tax deductible (as IEWF is listed on the Register of Environmental Organisations) and will be receipted and accounted for by IEWF. Donations must be deposited into IEWF's Public Fund. All cheques for payment of nursery expense must be agreed by the nursery management committee or the co-ordinators (as appropriate) and signed by 2 Directors of IEWF.

The **management committee** will:

- Take into account issues related to the site such as access for less-abled visitors and a safe and friendly working and visitor environment.
- Create and manage a budget based on regular overheads (lease, water, soil for potting etc.)

- Seek funding, equipment and supplies through grants, donations, sponsorship etc, and manage the funds. All funds may eventually be kept in an account specifically opened and managed for the community nursery. In the meantime funds will be managed within IEWF's accounts which are audited annually.
- Ensure the insurance cover and procedures are in place.
- Report regularly to council and consult to ensure all developments are in accordance with council requirements and legislation.
- Promote the nursery and the opportunities offered with the objectives of increasing environmental knowledge and attracting volunteers to the nursery.
- Assist with or implement education activities, such as running training sessions and workshops, co-ordinating with City of Ryde and Hunter's Hill Councils environmental education staff, creating signs and interpretive materials, etc.
- Coordinate the daily running of the nursery, if required.
- The management committee should initially meet face to face a minimum of 3 times per year. Email will constitute a meeting at all other times. Email will also constitute a record of meetings. Emails which include spending related decisions will be printed and kept in IEWF's minute's folder for audit purposes.
- Create a five year action plan including a broad guideline to selection and quantities of plants with input from initial volunteers.

Volunteer co-ordinator/s

A roster will be established to ensure that plants are watered or at least checked every 1 to 3 days, depending on prevailing weather conditions.

The co-ordinator/s will:

- Be in charge of access to the nursery and garden. A combination padlock will be used and code will only be given to known and trusted volunteers.
- Check regularly that all health and safety (Work, Health and Safety) measures are followed and highlight potential hazards to visitors and volunteers.
- Monitor resources, request supplies / equipment from the management committee.

- Oversee the activities of the volunteers / visitors and ensure everyone undertaking activities at the nursery signs on and off (for insurance purposes and for tracking volunteer hours). New volunteers to the nursery will also need to register by providing their contact details and indicate if they can be added to the contact email list. Casual visitors, for example, those buying plants or pottering in the open community garden will not be required to join or sign in and out. However a note should be made of the number of casual visitors each day. See also fees above.
- Participate in nursery activities, demonstrate correct methods and run short education sessions.
- Ensure plants are watered and maintained.
- Schedule, co-ordinate and promote plant give-away days and other promotions (with the assistance of the management committee and volunteers).
- Schedule, co-ordinate and promote planting days (with the assistance of the management committee and volunteers). If planting on Council land co-ordinate with Council Bushcare Officer when planning.
- Meet, greet, discuss such topics as the roll of the nursery and environmental issues, health and safety and importantly, habitat corridors and connections.
- Manage a schedule for access by other groups.
- Ensure that species and quantities of plants grown are those planned for and required.
- Record all seed and cutting collections, germination, growth rates and success rates, methods used and plants sold, given away or planted.
- Undertake and record experimentation with media and growing techniques.

Health and safety – See Appendix A

A nominated regular volunteer will need to be present when new volunteers are present at the nursery for the purpose of security, safety and to provide guidelines for activities, and to ensure these guidelines are followed.

All new visitors to the nursery will:

- Be shown any hazards or potential hazards within the nursery and its surrounds.
- Have demonstrated to them the safe way to lift (bending knees).
- Have demonstrated to them the safe way to use any tools or equipment.
- Advised to conduct themselves in a sensible manner (if they are not).
- Be provided with gloves and be requested to wear appropriate clothing.

For health and safety actions and emergency response see **Appendix A** below.

Review of The Habitat's procedures

Activities to be regularly reviewed include:

- how to attract new volunteers,
- status and recognition of volunteers,
- communications with volunteers,
- training of volunteers,
- community education,
- conflict resolution,
- Work, Health and Safety (including risk assessment and minimisation),
- child protection,
- standards relating to plant health and nursery and garden management
- expansion of the Habitat Network and network of habitat.

Nursery - Seed and plant provenance

All plants grown will be natives of the local area and sourced locally.

All plants grown will be those species suitable for urban gardens or bushcare plantings and with a focus on their habitat potential for our local native fauna.

Seeds and cuttings will be collected by the authorised volunteers. An authorising letter from the land manager must be carried at time of collecting, see Seed and Cutting Collection guidelines document.

All seed and plant material entering the nursery should be labelled with genus and species, source of material, date of collection and recorded in the appropriate book.

Only limited smaller trees will be grown for urban gardens. However, some may be grown for bushcare sites and for strategic plantings.

A focus will be on growing cuttings from plants which are difficult to grow from seed.

A diverse range of species in smaller quantities will be grown in preference to large quantities of the same species – aim for greater biodiversity.

A record will be made of all aspects of growing seeds and cuttings, including media and growth rates, in order to learn and improve success rates.

Sustainability

The nursery and garden will:

- be inclusive and aim to share plants and produce
- be chemical free except for exceptional weed control within the nursery only. Moveable weed mat will be used as a preference – taking into account avoidance of trip hazards. Natural insect controls will be utilised.
- grow a diverse range of local native habitat plants and food plants
- not detrimentally impact on the environment inside or outside of the nursery by aiming for zero run-off, not using chemicals, storing soil securely, using only the amount of water needed to ensure plants' optimum growth and by controlling any weeds which may grow.
- aim to incorporate water saving, reuse, recycling, composting, mulching, habitat and energy efficiency techniques
- grow community throughout Ryde and Hunter's Hill
- reuse all pots by cleaning with water only
- remove all rubbish from the site

- keep the nursery and surrounds hygienic, neat and tidy
- create attractive garden beds near the nursery to demonstrate the use of native plants, food plants and habitat elements.

Promotion of nursery and garden and its objectives

The objectives of The Habitat and the Habitat Network will be promoted. Any promotional ideas for The Habitat are to be approved by the management committee and a budget approved before commencing any activity.

Innovative ideas are encouraged.

Any activities taking place outside of the designated growing area should have the approval of the land or property owner, in writing, prior to planning the activity.

Closing down the nursery and garden

If for any reason the nursery and garden closes down all equipment and supplies, etc (not belonging to Council) will be donated to another community nursery or compatible community project. Any remaining funds will be donated to a community not-for-profit organisation of the committee's choosing.

Appendix A - Potential Hazards, measures and responsibility

Potential Hazard	Measure to be taken	Responsibility
Hoses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure hoses neatly stowed when not in use - Point out hazard to visitors and volunteers 	Co-ordinator and all working within nursery and garden
Lifting plants, soil or benches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keep back straight and bend knees - Display sign for safe lifting techniques 	Co-ordinator and all working within nursery and garden
Soil contamination & soil-borne bacteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wear gloves when handling soil. - Ensure soil is moist whenever handling to avoid air born contaminants - If moving soil ensure it is moist to avoid dust, or wear a face mask 	Co-ordinator and all working within nursery and garden
Sharp tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure gloves are worn when using tools - Ensure tools are not left on the ground or in hazardous locations 	Co-ordinator and all working within nursery and garden
Spiders and insect bites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure gloves are checked before adorning - Ensure gloves are worn when lifting or moving equipment or plants 	Co-ordinator and all working within nursery and garden
Flood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - During heavy rain events assess the overland flow through the site - Personal safety is the first priority - If overland flow is significant vacate the site, co-ordinator should take the sign-in book 	Co-ordinator and all working within nursery and garden

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meet in the car park and check that all volunteers not signed out are present 	
Fire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There should be no risk of a fire. However should one occur, vacate the site calmly with co-ordinator taking the sign-in book - Meet at the car park and check that all volunteers not signed out are present 	Co-ordinator and all working within nursery and garden
Allergic reaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If a volunteer has an allergic reaction ask them what has occurred and if they have medication - If symptoms are severe take the sufferer to the medical centre at the shopping centre (see address below) or call 000 if very severe 	Co-ordinator and all working within nursery and garden
Snakes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keep the areas under benches clear so that a snake can be seen easily - If a snake is seen leave it alone and warn other volunteers 	Co-ordinator and all working within nursery and garden
Inclement weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be aware of inclement weather and bring appropriate clothing - No-one is expected to work in adverse conditions - if you are not comfortable don't work - Bring plenty of water to drink 	Co-ordinator and all working within nursery and garden
Foot injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Closed footwear must be worn in and around the nursery 	Co-ordinator and all working within nursery and garden
Sun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UV protection – sun screen should be used, and a long sleeve shirt and a hat should be 	Co-ordinator and all working within nursery and garden

	worn for protection from the sun as appropriate to prevailing conditions	
Manual handling of plants, tools and other nursery activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The committee will to the best of its ability provide a safe environment - Volunteers will be asked regularly to input into how activities can be undertaken more safely and effectively - Volunteers should only undertake activities that they feel confident in achieving safely 	Co-ordinator and all working within nursery and garden
Drug and alcohol abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No drugs or alcohol will be allowed within the nursery / garden - Anyone intoxicated will be asked to leave - If an intoxicated person is not in a fit state to leave, a friend, an ambulance or police should be called – as appropriate 	Co-ordinator and all working within nursery and garden
Harassment and discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Will not be tolerated - One warning will be given to anyone acting in this manner - If the first warning is ignored the person will be asked to leave and not return to the nursery/garden 	Co-ordinator and all working within nursery and garden
Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure all equipment is cleaned and returned to its rightful place before signing out 	Co-ordinator and all working within nursery and garden

Appendix A – Emergency or accident

In case of any medical emergency – call 000

Or if the situation is not so urgent take the volunteer to:

Family Midway Medical Centre 117 North Rd, Ryde NSW 2112 - (02) 9878 6988

For First Aid:

- **Call 000 if a medical emergency**
- there is a First Aid kit on the shelf in the shed
- for cuts and abrasions clean wound with clean water and stop the bleeding by applying a bandage and pressure as required
- for burns cool the wound with cool running water for at least 15 minutes or until help arrives
- for bites have the volunteer sit or lie somewhere comfortable and keep them calm until help arrives
- for shock lie the patient down and keep them warm until help arrives
- for allergies or unusual reactions or disorientation of any kind, seat the volunteer and ask if they know the cause and treatment. If not known and symptoms persist either call 000 or take them to the Medical Centre
- make a record of the accident or incident, person/s involved, actions taken and preferably have the co-ordinator and the people involved sign that this is a true record of the accident or event. This may be required for insurance purposes.