



FOOD FOR ALL
SWAN HILL REGION

THE EDIBLE GARDEN

STARTER KIT

contents

2 Why grow an edible garden?

3 Planning your garden

5 Maintaining your garden

9 Keeping your garden healthy

11 Preparing to harvest

13 Community Gardens

15 Seed Library

15 Contact Food For All

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Why grow an edible garden?

There are many benefits of growing your own edible garden including:

- A type of physical activity that gets you outdoors
- Increases the variety of foods in your diet
- Eating nutritious and seasonal foods on a regular basis
- Strengthens social connections
- Cost-effective in the long-run
- Allows you to build a greater connection with nature



Planning to build your garden

No matter what size or type of edible garden you're thinking of building, the planning phase is crucial for a successful garden!

SITE ANALYSIS

Have a good look at your garden and take note of the shady, sunny and sheltered areas, location of trees or any areas that may get water logged. *Note: Produce should have at least 5 hours of full sun per day.*

ACCESS

When building your garden, you want to ensure that it is easily accessible including considerations for watering, how close it is to the worm farm and/or compost system and your water outlets. This will help with the overall functionality of your garden!



GARDEN SIZE

Although we all dream of having an elaborate veggie patch, it is best to begin small and focus your attention on making it as productive as possible and slowly expanding it. Think about what you would like to produce and what space it will require - remember you can grow a lot in small pots!!

GARDEN PLAN

It's time to draw out a garden plan! Remember to start small and plan BIG! Try and make sure the right plants are in the right position and know your limitations in regards to space, water, time and money.



What do I need to build an edible garden?

Whether you're thinking of building a complete in-ground garden bed or just wanting a couple of pots, there are a few key tools that you'll need to build and maintain your edible garden!

- Good soil (pH 5.0 - 7.0)
- Water / a watering system
- Sun
- Garden bed materials (e.g. pots, wood, crates)
- Seeds or seedlings
- Garden tools (trowel, weeder and your hands)
- Patience and persistence



Maintaining your edible garden

Good maintenance of your edible garden will lead to a more productive harvest. There are a few practices that have a big impact of your gardens health and longevity.

SOIL

Good soil is key to a successful garden. Your soil should be:

- Crumbly to touch
- Dark in colour
- Moisture retentive
- Within a pH range of 6.0 - 7.5 (you can check this with a soil pH kit)

FERTILISERS

Produce requires a lot of nutrients to help it grow. Compost and aged manures will provide most of your plants nutritional needs but if fertilisers are necessary opt for an organic liquid such as *worm tea*, *seaweed solution* or *fish emulsions*. Note: feed the soil not the plant!



Composting

Composting is the breakdown of organic waste (e.g. food scraps) and can be a great soil improver! Although there are things to add and things to keep out...

TO ADD - Fruit and veggie scraps, coffee grounds, tea bags, herbs, leaves, egg shells, pizza containers, egg cartons

KEEP OUT - Meat and fish scraps, dairy, office paper, weed seeds and bulbs, citrus fruit, diseased plants



Worm farms

Live in a small space? Then worm farms are a great option for you! Keeping a worm farm decreases the amount of organic waste you put into your general bin. Feed them fruit and vegetable scraps and they'll produce a rich garden fertiliser.

Watering

Just like ourselves, plants need water to survive. Living in Australia we are aware of the importance of water with most of us living through consistent droughts and water restrictions so we need savvy ways of getting water to our plants!

There are four ways to source water

Mains supply, tank water, grey water and direct rainfall

Things to consider

- Group plants according to their water needs
- Choose light coloured pots to reduce the impact of evaporation
- Ensure soil is rich in compost as it will help retain water
- Test your soil before you water (if it's damp it probably doesn't need a water)
- Water the roots not the foliage/leaves
- Water in the morning
- Mulching will reduce water evaporation



Drip Hose Watering

Drip hose watering is poly tubing that has filtered holes where each hole releases water every hour. Drip hose systems water the soil directly and promotes stronger root growth. To put it simply... it helps your produce grow better!

Although this watering system requires some initial time to set up, it reduces the likelihood of pests and diseases, allows you to water during the scorching summer days and once set up on a timing system is an easy way of keeping your plants hydrated!



Wicking Beds

Wicking beds are another great way of watering your plants. It waters your plants from below the soil rather so that the moisture is drawn up through the soil via a process called capillary action or wicking - (hence the name wicking bed!). Basically they are containers with water reservoirs at the base - like a big self-watering pot.

Keeping your garden healthy

Sometimes our plants aren't always looking their best. This may be due to something simple like too much water or because of something a bit more serious like a pest or disease.

Things to consider

Have you planted the right produce in the right place?

How's the soil? Too dry? Too wet? Enough fertilizer?

How's the weather been recently? Scorching heat? Frosts?

Does the plant show signs of nutrient deficiency? e.g. yellow leaves?

All of these things can have an impact on your plants health and likely to not be due to a pest or disease.



Garden Hygiene

Many diseases that harm our plants commonly come from poor garden hygiene practices. So make sure that you:

- Sharpen your tools
- Prune diseased or damaged wood from trees
- Remove fallen leaf litter and fallen infected fruit
- Don't put diseased leaves or fruit in your compost bin
- Minimise insecticide use
- Avoid using high nitrogen fertilizers



Crop Rotation

There are a number of soil borne diseases that can affect our plants. Crop rotation is where produce is planted in different gardens beds each season and reduces the likelihood of on-going soil borne diseases having an impact on your plants. A good way of keeping record of your crops is to keep a diary or have a blackboard in your shed with what was planted when!

For more info on crop rotation visit www.sgaonline.org.au

Preparing to harvest

Should I plant seeds or seedlings?

SEEDLINGS

'A young plant sprouted from a seed'

- Easier to grow
- Will give you a great head-start to the season (up to 6 weeks)
- Organic and/or unusual varieties are readily available

SEEDS

More cost-effective BUT hot weather can prevent germination

(sprouting) of some seeds

- Better for carrots, parsnips etc!

Annuals vs. perennials

Some plants are annual, meaning they are only grown for one season before having to be replanted the following season.

e.g tomatoes, broccoli

Perennial plants continue to grow for many years and don't have to be replanted every season e.g. rosemary, asparagus, rhubarb



Seasonal planting guide

Are you confused about what to plant when? Most vegetables are seasonal or referred to as annuals and need to be replaced every year.

The following is a quick annual seedling planting guide, to assist you with choosing what to grow.

Plant	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Asian Greens*												
Asparagus												
Basil*												
Bean* (summer)												
Beetroot												
Broad Bean												
Broccoli												
Brussel sprouts												
Cabbage												
Capsicum												
Carrot*												
Cauliflower												
Celery												
Chilli												
Coriander												
Cucumber												
Eggplant												
Endive												
Globe Artichoke												
Leek												
Lettuce												
Onion												
Parsley												
Parsnip*												
Pea*												
Potato												
Pumpkin												
Radish												
Rocket												
Silver beet												
Spinach												
Spring onion												
Sweet corn												
Tomato												
Zucchini												

Community Gardens

George Lay Park

144 Chapman Street, Swan Hill, Vic.

The garden is open to all community members and is supported by a group of local volunteers.

Meets on the first Saturday of every month at 10am.

GIFT Permaculture Community Garden Swan Hill

(G.I.F.T. - Growing Incredible Food Together) We grow food together and share in the harvest.

Location: On grounds at the back of Swan Hill Specialist School. No access via front of school ; enter via school back gate on Wilkins Grove.

When do you meet: Sunday's at 2pm & Wednesday's at 4.30pm

Process to come along: Phone or text prior to attending on 0425 700 172.

Murray Downs

100 Murray Downs Drive, Murray Downs, NSW

Monday and Friday working bees, 9.00am

Phone or text prior to attending on 0427 569 652.

Lake Boga Community Garden

Situated near the silos at the intersection of Station St and Marraboor St.

Weekly get together every Monday at 10.30am.

Social Support Group Garden Club

Swan Hill Neighbourhood House, Fridays 10.00am-12 noon.

Eligibility requires My Aged Care (65 years+), Home Care Package or NDIS referral.

This group is aimed at supporting green thumbs in growing a variety of vegetables, herbs and floral options in our community garden. Also involves planning for crop rotations and a social morning tea.

Phone: 5033 9359

Swan Hill & District Garden Club

We provide a meeting place for gardeners and others interested in gardening, for their mutual benefit.

Email: shgardenclub17@gmail.com

Meetings: 1st Wednesday of month Grain Shed, King St, Swan Hill

Contact:

Facebook- Swan Hill & District Garden Club

Marg - 0427 376 624

Call or text to find out how to become involved or if you have any questions around gardening.

The Seed Library

Swan Hill Regional Library's Seed Library is a collection of free seeds that you can use to plant, grow and enjoy at home.

The library is for gardeners, from beginner to expert, and is a place where you can learn how to grow, harvest and save seeds. The seed collection depends on donations and seasons.

Have a chat to the friendly Library staff to ask about how to borrow and donate seeds to the Seed Library

Address: 53 Campbell Street Swan Hill

Email: library@swanhill.vic.gov.au

Phone: 5036 2480



Contact us

Food For All-Swan Hill Region

Facebook: Food for All- Swan Hill Region

Instagram: [foodforall.community](https://www.instagram.com/foodforall.community)

Website: www.foodforall.community



If you have any feedback, contact Food for All through Instagram, Facebook or our website.