

# Canberra City Farm Members Handbook



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## Welcome

Thank you for your interest in volunteering as a member at Canberra City Farm (CCF)! This handbook provides an overview of the activities you can get involved in at the Farm and participate in the vision of CCF as a member. The Farm would not achieve anything without the help and support of our volunteer members.

There are many ways you can contribute. Some are more challenging than others, but they all make a difference. Member opportunities include propagating, planting, preserving, coordinating, labouring, working bees, marketing, advertising, teaching, mentoring, filming, grant writing and many more.

The CCF members work together on the shared communal spaces and projects at CCF. Some members are also Garden Allotment Holders farming individually managed plots at the CCF. There are about 65 allotment holders. Everyone together creates a large, diverse and warm community working on different types of projects at CCF. Information about the allotments can be found in the CCF Allotment Holders Handbook. All Canberra City Farmers collaborate with each other to create a diverse ecosystem of collaborative relationships at CCF.

Be sure to check out our website for updated volunteer opportunities, or if you have something you would be interested in contributing to, please let us know. Canberra City Farm is an opportunity for you to be creative and contribute in a way that works for you!

# Canberra City Farm Objectives and Values

The Canberra City Farm's constitution is available in full on its website at [https://ccfarm.org.au/newsite/?page\\_id=42](https://ccfarm.org.au/newsite/?page_id=42)

The objective of the Canberra City Farm is to develop a hub where knowledge and experience of living in harmony with a viable and healthy local environment is creatively shared through:

- Engaging and linking with the community
- Strengthening existing activities and groups
- Nurturing healthy soil to grow healthy food
- Demonstrating options for sustainable living
- Providing opportunities for learning by doing
- Fostering caring communities

The aim of the Canberra City Farm is for the Canberra regional community to live in harmony with a viable and healthy local environment.

The values which the Canberra City Farm demonstrates are:

- Integrity
- Diversity
- Respect
- Fairness
- Sharing and Community
- Ecological and societal sustainability
- Intergenerational equity
- Transparency and open communication
- Collaboration and inclusiveness
- Healthy food for all
- Food sovereignty

## A brief history and future aspirations

The location of Canberra City Farm first started by volunteers hosting a demonstration food production site for 30 days around a small example sustainable house at Floriade for 2 years. This was so successful that we sought to use an inner-city site and test a permanent model there. The Turner site was established with a master plan based on permaculture principles and a welcoming social space. The intention was to test if we could co-create a space with local residents to sustain the farm with local volunteers. Although everyone was happy with it, the key need of local residents was to drop off their compost rather than stay committed to building a shared vegetable and food garden. Because of the short term lease we were also unable to convince the water utility to set up a permanent water supply.

The next experiment was to move to a bigger site (2 Dairy Rd) and test the idea if we could co-create an ecosystem of small enterprises where the waste of one was the nutrients for another and see if we could create a sustainable livelihood for our enterprise entrepreneurs. The intention was to also model the best of city farms around Australia like CERES in Melbourne and the Perth City Farm and others. Could we be an attraction for school groups visiting Canberra like a Questacon for food and sustainable living? Could the CCF become a national hands-on educational institution?

We aim to educate people about creating a thriving local food economy that involves growing food on balconies, decks, backyards, shared local gardens and connecting with local farmers in this bioregion.

## CCF groups and how you can get involved

The following opportunities are currently available for volunteers to help at the Farm. As the Farm matures, other opportunities will also become available.

- *Working bees* – volunteers join in communal work every Monday and Thursday morning to undertake whatever work is required at the Farm on that particular day. These working bees are a great way to meet people and make new friends. We plan to resume the weekend working bees in the near future.
- *Propagation* – edible plants are propagated for use on the Farm as well as for selling and raising money to cover running costs of the Farm.
- *Four-bed crop rotation* – seasonal vegetables are grown in accordance with crop rotation principles.
- *Maintaining fruit trees* – apricot, peach, cherry, plum, apple, quince, almond and pear trees, are pruned, mulched, fertilised and monitored/managed for pests and disease.
- *Preserving* - some of the fruit and vegetables grown at the Farm are preserved and bottled by volunteers. These preserves are then sold and the funds raised help to cover running costs of the Farm. Preserving days are held periodically at a time that is convenient to the majority of interested volunteers.
- *Mowing lawns* – this is an ongoing task, particularly in the warmer months.
- *Communication* - you can get involved with the Communications team that creates monthly newsletters and maintains the CCF website and promotes CFF activities
- *Education* - the education subcommittee meets via Zoom each month and reports to the Farm's Committee on matters including the Education Strategy, Education Calendar and educational activities.
- *Food Sustainability* – this group collaborates with other Canberra urban agriculture and local food system groups, farmers and agencies to ensure activities and policies are integrated and work with good collaboration. This group is also collaborating with other groups and the ACT Government to design and implement a Food and Fibre Strategy for the ACT. This group also updates the [Local Food Systems map](#) under Resources on the CCF website.

- Building relationships and collaborating with other local groups is an important part of the role of CCF and you are most welcome to help build relationships and networks with other local food groups and start new collaborations

Volunteers needn't have experience in any of the above-mentioned activities, as existing team members are happy to share their knowledge. We all learn from each other at the Farm! If any of these activities interests you then please email your interest to [info@ccfarm.org.au](mailto:info@ccfarm.org.au).

## Looking after our soil and our environment

Canberra City Farm sees one of its roles as teaching people about regenerative growing. The aim of regenerative growing is to leave soil in a better condition after we have used it to grow food. We also want people to conserve not only the soil but our water resources, and to manage pests, diseases and weeds in organic ways to get rid of harmful chemicals from the garden and our food.

One of our constitutional objectives is to “nurture healthy soil to grow healthy food” and our constitutional aim is to help the “Canberra regional community to live in harmony with a viable and healthy local environment”. As part of “walking our talk”, we expect our members, including allotment holders, to practice organic methods on the Farm, to build soil fertility, and to optimise water usage. These are part of our shared farm responsibilities.

If you have any questions about what organic methods are or if there is something you want to do but aren't sure about, you can talk with others or participate in Canberra City Farm education activities. Alternatively, if you look at the Canberra Organic Growers (COGS) website, this can provide you with advice <https://cogs.asn.au/organic-gardening/>. COGS's practices are based upon the Australian Certified Organic Standard 2021, copies of which are available at <https://austorganic.com/industry/certification-and-standards/standards/acos/>.

Some ready rules of thumb are:

- While mulch can help suppress weeds and slow evaporation in warm weather, please don't use carpet, plastics or synthetics as mulch. These all cause significant problems as they break down. Non-shiny cardboard with sticky tape removed, non-shiny newsprint, non-weedy straw and hay and hessian coffee bags are some possible mulch examples.
- Please don't bring in soil from outside the Farm. Even your own backyard soil can contain diseases and pests like nematodes that can quickly spread across the Farm.
- If you want to introduce a different plant to the Farm, check that it is not a “prohibited plant” under ACT legislation - you might be surprised at what's there [www.legislation.act.gov.au/di/2015-59/current/pdf/2015-59.pdf](http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/di/2015-59/current/pdf/2015-59.pdf).
- Compost is produced on the Farm for Farm use (including allotments) and occasionally high quality bulk compost may be bought by the Committee for purchase by members.

- Micro-sprinklers and drippers are allowed on the Farm, but only use them enough to maintain plant health – please avoid surface pooling and don't trench irrigate. Hand-held trigger hoses are also allowed. In all cases, optimise your watering to the plants and weather.
- If you need to use netting for crop protection, make sure it's wildlife-safe. We are in a beautiful area next to the Jerrabomberra Wetlands and we want our feathered insect eaters to be safe as well.
- When the end of a growing season comes, we usually compost the vegetation in communal bins. It's really important to remove plastic or metal ties, or pieces of pantyhose that were used to tie up vegetables, before you place the green waste in the compost bins. This foreign material gets caught around the shredding machinery.
- We dispose of invasive weeds in a safe manner, so if you dig up any couch grass, please put it and any other invasive species in the area marked "For invasive species and diseased plants". We are working on the best way to organise compostable material, so bear with us and watch for the instruction signs.

## Safety First for you, your neighbours and the wildlife

We need to ensure a safe environment exists for all people and wildlife at the Farm.

Members should wear sturdy protective shoes, long sleeved clothing and gardening gloves for any outdoor gardening activities. For summer, sun protection is important and in winter you'll need to rug-up to contend with the chilly wind.

Tools and equipment are available for members to use at the Farm. If you are uncertain how to use any piece of equipment, or if it appears faulty, please seek assistance from one of the longer-term members. Please remember to pack your tools away when you are finished with them.

There are numerous species of wildlife living at the farm and at the neighbouring wetlands, including birds, bats, rabbits, turtles, lizards, snakes, possums and frogs amongst others. We live in harmony with these creatures and acknowledge their importance in the ecosystem. Members should not interact with this wildlife as it may result in injury to the wildlife or injury to the member. Several snake-bite kits are located around the Farm. Look for the yellow paint around the kits. As you work around the Farm, it is suggested that you note and memorise the locations of the kits. A snake-bite kit is located at the bench outside of the LESS (Low Energy Super Shed).

## Administrative Stuff

The ACT Government had agreed a licence for us to 2 Dairy Road for 10 years until 2025 with an option for an additional 10 years. We have conditions that we have to meet under our licence and so we and our enterprises and allotment holders have to comply with their rules.

If you have not yet had a tour of the Farm, then please ask for one. Tours take about an hour and are a great way to receive a visual overview of all of the gardening opportunities and experiences available to members. You'll also be shown the Allotment holders' plots, which helps members to know the diversity of food that can be grown in Canberra. Please be mindful that members are not permitted to interfere with the vegetables growing in the Allotments that are not your individual plot.

## Contact us

If you have any questions, suggestions or concerns, please contact the Canberra City Farm email ([info@ccfarm.org.au](mailto:info@ccfarm.org.au)). For more information and resources, please check our website (<https://ccfarm.org.au>). You can also engage with us on Facebook (Canberra City Farm) and Twitter (@CanberraCtyFarm).