



Gardening at the Old Schoolhouse

Gardener's Guide

Join our Gardening Group and help to create something beautiful at the Old Schoolhouse

What are the aims of our garden project?

- To create a well-maintained space that, aligned with the broader purpose of the Old Schoolhouse Community Project, is inviting and accessible to all.
- To develop strong social bonds between participants who look after, learn from, and share with each other.
- To foster a sense of belonging and attachment among both gardeners and visitors.
- To develop an example of environmental stewardship through sustainable practices including composting, water conservation and organic gardening techniques.
- To provide some home-grown ingredients for use in our kitchen.

How will the Old Schoolhouse Garden be run?

The model we have chosen to follow for our communal garden is one where gardeners are **not** assigned individual plots. Instead, the entire garden is planted, harvested, and maintained by the group.

How will the garden be maintained?

- We will arrange regular group gardening sessions that will ensure participants have the opportunity to work together and develop relationships.
- We would also encourage gardeners to ‘pop in and potter’. This would allow anyone to turn up outside of the regular sessions and to spend time contributing to the project.
- A garden notice board will display a map of the various plots, a schedule of work and necessary tasks as well as some advice and guidance. Co-ordinators could also direct group efforts at the beginning of each meeting.
- We will aim to source as many plants and materials as possible from donations (cuttings and specimens from participants / gifts from gardens centres and builder’s yards).

Guidance for Gardeners

We hope that our garden group proves popular and that participants enjoy the social aspect of working together as well as taking pleasure from seeing the space develop.

To ensure the group’s smooth running, we ask that anyone wishing to take part first reads through the notes in the following section to ensure that they understand how we plan to proceed with the project.

Finally, in order to become a member of the group, we ask that participants complete a registration form to indicate that they have read, accept and agree to follow the guidance given in this booklet.

Guidance for Gardeners - FAQs and Concerns

<p>Is there an overall aim or vision for the Old Schoolhouse Garden and gardening project?</p>	<p>Our priority is that the garden should reflect and complement the wider aims of the Old Schoolhouse Community Project, perhaps most particularly in tackling isolation and promoting inclusion and community.</p> <p>A few areas are key to this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The gardening project should serve as an opportunity for people from different backgrounds to come together socially. • Gardeners have the sense they are collaborating to create something that is to be enjoyed by the widest possible community. • Produce from the garden is used primarily in our own Old Schoolhouse kitchen.
<p>Can groups or individuals adopt a specific area in the garden for which they will have exclusive access and responsibility?</p>	<p>No. The garden is to be considered a ‘shared space’. In our communal garden participants are encouraged to work together on whatever areas need attention. We will not divide the garden into plots or provide any groups or individuals with ‘exclusive access’.</p>
<p>What happens to any fruit or vegetables that are grown in the garden?</p> <p>Can I take the produce I have planted or cared for when it’s ready?</p>	<p>Crops are sown in order to provide fruit or vegetables for the Old Schoolhouse kitchen. Anything surplus to the kitchen’s requirements will subsequently be made available to gardeners. It is important that individuals are not given the impression that they have a claim to any produce.</p>

<p>Can I paint walls / alter layouts or make landscaping decisions?</p> <p>Who decides on the overall plan for the garden and how areas should be used?</p>	<p>No. The Management and Trustees of the Old Schoolhouse Community project will make decisions regarding landscaping, how areas are used, construction of sheds etc. and major cosmetic changes.</p>
<p>How do I know what tasks need doing?</p>	<p>Turn up any time for weeding! Other necessary tasks will be posted on the garden notice board or explained at the beginning of larger, organised meetings.</p>
<p>Does the Old Schoolhouse have tools?</p> <p>Can I bring my own equipment?</p>	<p>We have tools that participants are welcome to use but would ask that gardeners will return all tools and equipment to the correct place at the end of their session. Participants may of course bring their own equipment however, The Old Schoolhouse can take no responsibility for any loss or damage to personal equipment.</p>
<p>What happens if someone digs up something I've planted?</p>	<p>It could be that what you have planted would grow better in a different location. However, it could also be that someone has made a mistake and was overzealous in their weeding. We need to recognise that, in a communal garden, there will always be different levels of expertise among participants as well as contrasting ideas of how things should be done, how things should look etc.</p> <p>Participants must accept that, whilst every effort should made to avoid undoing someone else's hard work, mistakes will be made and accidents may happen from time to time. The group should serve as an opportunity to learn from one and other, develop participants' skills.</p>

<p>Why would people want to work in the Old Schoolhouse Garden? What's in it for me?!</p>	<p>As has been explained gardeners should not expect to take away produce (as they would if they had a private plot or an allotment). However, we would hope that the project would offer participants much more. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An opportunity to socialise with others. • A sense of belonging to a group that makes a tangible, positive difference to their local environment and to others. • Involvement in a shared, creative project. • A chance to learn new skills or share their experience and talent with others. • Time to enjoy being outdoors. • A healthy activity. • Increased awareness of other projects and activities available at the Old Schoolhouse. • Invitations to other social events. • Offers/vouchers for our café.
<p>I know nothing about gardening, can I still get involved?</p>	<p>Yes! Please come along and learn as you go.</p>
<p>I am a very experienced gardener what role do can I play in this project?</p>	<p>Let us know about your skills and expertise. Any advice or suggestions you may have will be gratefully received.</p>
<p>I have plants or cuttings to donate. Are you interested?</p>	<p>Yes! Donations are gratefully received. If you are able to provide some information about the plants (name / variety / care instructions etc.) it would be helpful.</p>

<p>What if I have an accident whilst gardening?</p>	<p>Participants must act responsibly and should not undertake any task to which they are unsuited or operate any potentially dangerous piece of equipment without a comprehensive understanding of its safe operation.</p> <p>Participants accept that there are different ground conditions / levels in the garden.</p> <p>Participants must accept that they are ultimately responsible for their own safety.</p>
<p>I have some chemicals that will be good for... Can I use them?</p>	<p>No. We aim to avoid using chemicals as far as possible and nothing should be introduced to the garden without the knowledge of management.</p>
<p>I have some good ideas or suggestions. How can I get someone to act on them?</p>	<p>Just share your thoughts with a member of the team here. Alternatively post something in the garden suggestion box.</p>
<p>Anything else?</p>	<p>Just one thing: please make sure you sign in (and out) at reception whenever you come to the garden.</p>

**We hope to see you soon.
Happy gardening!**



The Old Schoolhouse
Community Project

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