

# How to set-up a community gardening club



A community gardening club is a great way to get outside, meet your neighbours, take some exercise and have a really good time.

It's relaxing. You can grow some of your own food and you can make new friends. Not just that but every time you walk out of your front door you can walk past your community garden, head held high, shoulders back, proud of the patch of ground that is yours.

**1 Don't be a stranger** – A community gardening club is a club, and clubs need more than one person, so get your neighbours involved.

**2 Land ahoy!** – You'll need a patch of land. Talk to your Estate Manager and find out if there's a spare patch of land you could grow things on.

**3 Plan** – What's your garden going to be? An allotment? A haven for wildlife? A beauty spot? All three? Decide as a group.

**4 Grow** – Get going. Planning's great but getting your hands dirty is even better. Get out there and start transforming your patch.

**5 Celebrate** – You've got to enjoy it. Have a BBQ or a garden party. Invite the neighbours. Kick-back, you've earned it.

Setting up a community gardening club is a lot simpler than you might think. All you really need is some like-minded neighbours and a patch of ground you can work. The rewards are huge. Free exercise – who needs gym membership? A better community – imagine knowing all your neighbours and realising that, actually, you've got quite a lot in common. A nicer, safer place to live – your estate looks better and it's all thanks to you; even better, your improvements have made your estate safer.

Start by getting some other people interested. Ideally at least ten or so families / couples / individuals. Find a suitable area where you can garden. Probably best to talk to your Estate Manager, Tenants & Residents Association or landlord so they can help you find the best place. Decide as a group what you'd like your area to be. Depending on size, you can have different areas. A washing-up bowl in the ground can be a quick and easy pond for frogs and tadpoles (see our 'Guide to attracting wildlife'). You don't need much room to grow some fruit and veg (see our 'Guide to growing your own'). Or you can just plant some nice flowers.

It may be that you need some tools, a bench, a hose, a secure place to store everything. See our 'Guide to applying for funding' for more information on how you can get small grants to pay for these items.

Most importantly, enjoy it. It's supposed to be fun. Take the time to stand back and admire what you've achieved. Arrange regular social events with your group. Pat each other on the back and exchange stories of your heroic gardening efforts.

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