



COMMUNITY
GARDENS
AUSTRALIA



Winston Churchill Trust

Learn globally, inspire locally.

Aim: To study community garden networks to aid in the development of our national organisation

Key Focus areas:

- Governance
- Organisational structures
- Funding models
- Volunteer Management
- Membership systems & Management
- Public education
- Government engagement & support
- Communications
- Insurance





**Community gardens are
as diverse as the
communities that grow
them!**







1996 - present

Community Gardens Australia (CGA) is a not-for-profit, volunteer-run organisation that exists to support, provide resources to, network and advocate for community gardening activities in Australia.

What we do:

- Maintain a network of State government Coordinators and Regional Representatives
- Online directory of community gardens
- Online resources eg How to start a garden
- Resources for local
- Events and networking opportunities
- Advocacy services



How We Define Community Gardens

We consider any garden that allows community participation to be a community garden and will provide our support...

Examples:

- Community gardens
- School gardens that are open to the wider community
- City farms that allow community participation/workshops etc
- CSA's that allow community participation/workshops etc



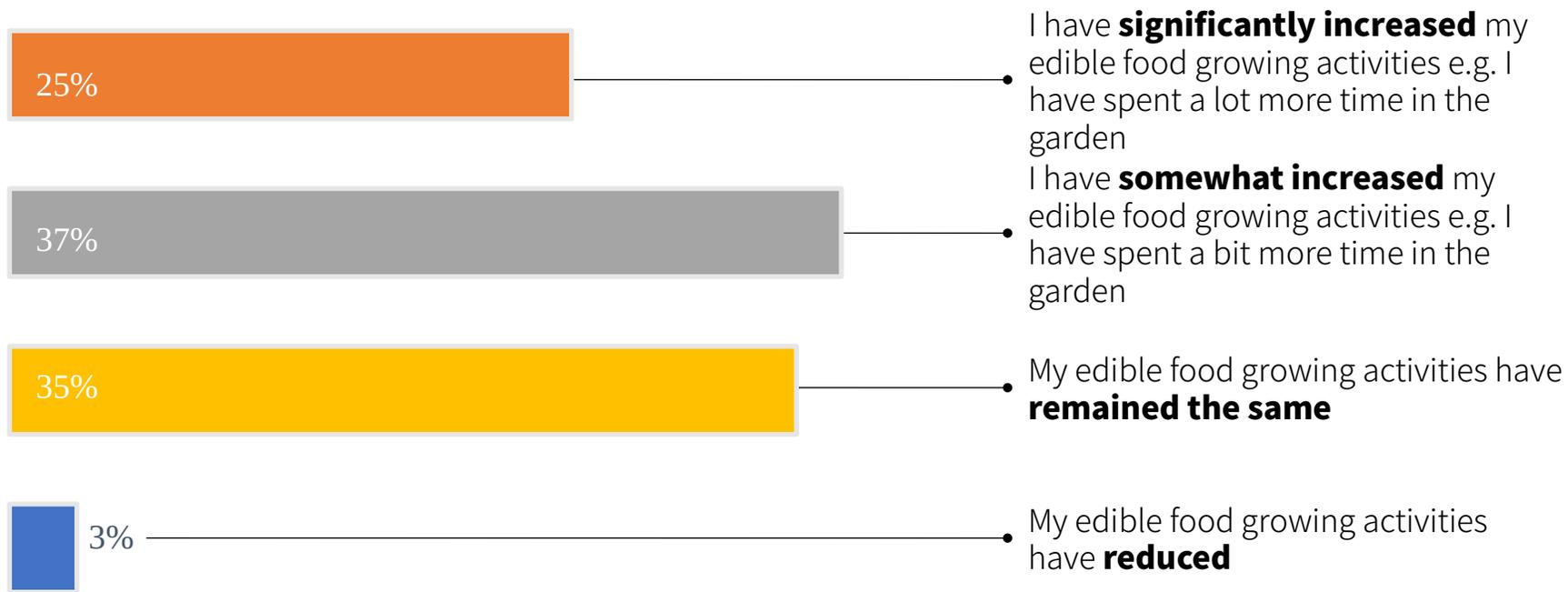
Community Gardening in recent times...

- Community gardens continue to grow in popularity
- The benefits are widely known and well documented
- The pandemic has increased food awareness and interest in growing
- People want to eat food that is healthy, tastes great, is low cost and that has decreased food miles
- People are looking for a connection with nature & other people
- 2020 survey shows 20,425 people a week visit and participate in their local community garden



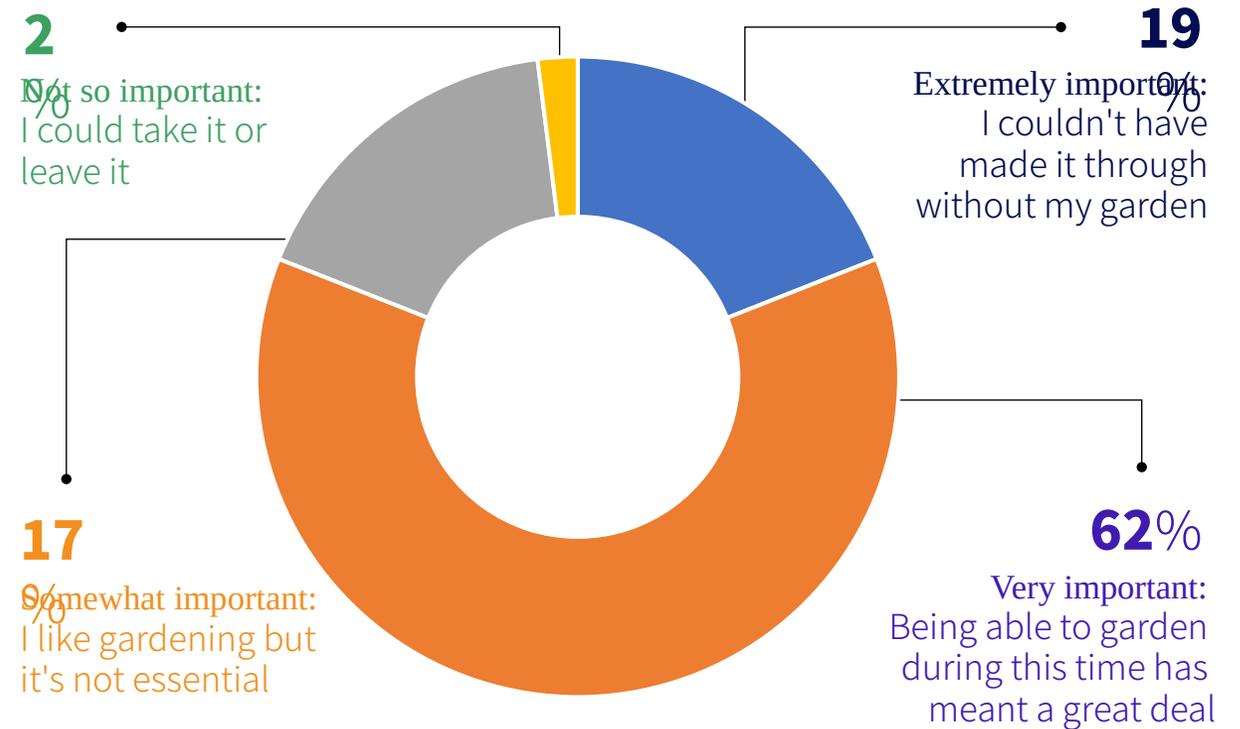
Did the pandemic lead to more edible gardening?

Q8: What impact has the COVID19 pandemic had on your edible food growing activities? (n= 8633)



How important was edible gardening during COVID-19?

Q11: n= 8597



“

During March and April I lost all of my work. It was a very anxious time, but the physical activity of setting up a few garden beds and resolving the issues of possum, bird and cabbage butterfly-proofing the gardens gave me a strong focus.

Female gardener since COVID-19, European Australian
Age not stated, Brisbane

“

It gives me hope and peace. It provides a sort of meditation or therapeutic quality which allows me to cope. It gives me purpose which I haven't had from working.

Female new gardener, European Australian
25-34, western Melbourne

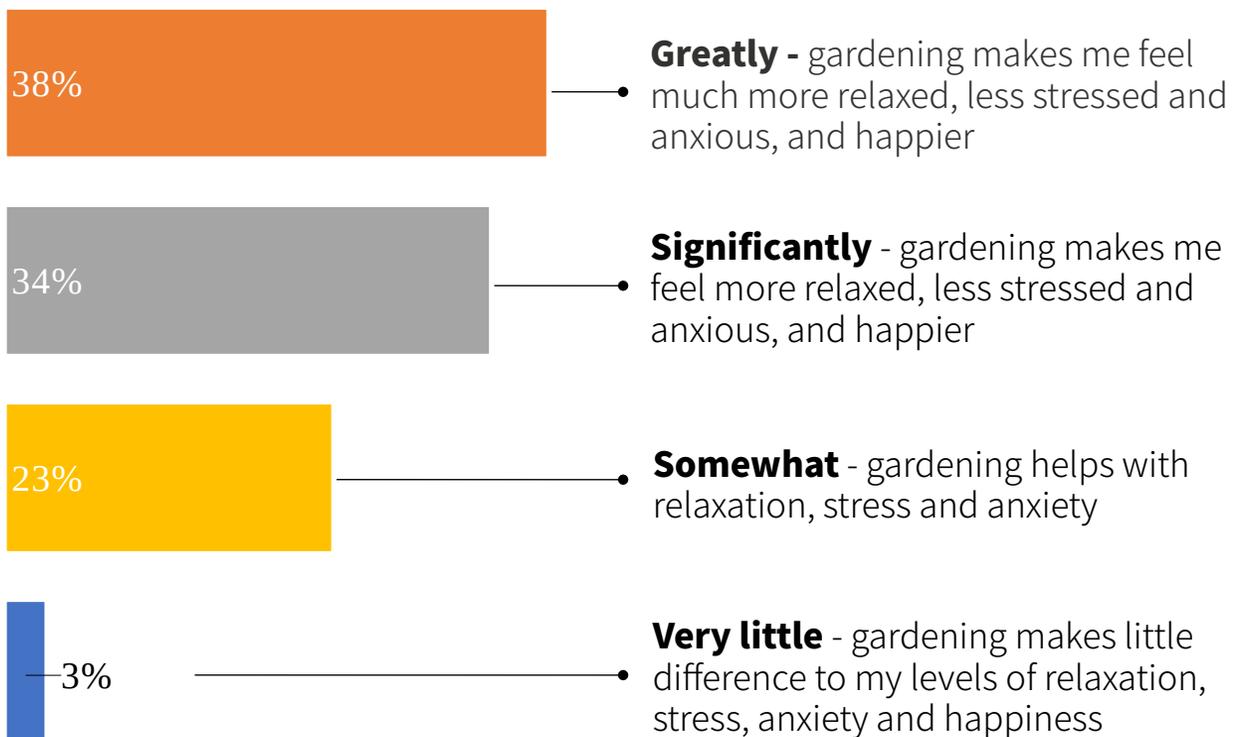
“

Gardening gave me a focus. It provided hope and reinforced my personal resilience. Putting my hands in the soil each day redirected my fear and anxiety about our future - I was able to transfer it to action.

Experienced female gardener, Anglo-Australian
55-64, South coast NSW

Edible gardening and mental health

Q13: To what extent have your gardening activities resulted in improved mental health and wellbeing? (n= 8642)



“Gardening has grounded me and connected me to empowering myself in a particularly disempowering circumstance. It’s given me an outlet for my creativity and calmed my mood as I’ve gotten used to letting go of my pre-Covid 19 life. It’s taken place of work hours and actually is more meaningful this work with my mother earth. It’s a deeply fulfilling and rewarding experience.

New female gardener, Anglo-Australian
25-34, Geelong

“It has kept me calm and focussed on the future. There is a future when you garden.

Female gardener, Anglo-Australian
Age not stated, Tasmania

“Thank goodness for gardening! It brings me peace, happiness, comfort, generosity, connections, health and nourishment.

New female gardener, Anglo-Australian
25-34, NSW

Edible gardening as therapy

“ Growing food and gardening is essential to me. I have PTSD, fibromyalgia and arthritis and being in the garden provides huge relief. Growing food is also really satisfying and therapeutic, it makes you feel you are contributing in a meaningful way. Food growing and gardening have particularly helped during lockdown to help cope with increased anxiety.

Experienced low-income female gardener, European Australian, 45-54, regional Tasmania

“ My concern is that politicians don't listen to the positive effect on society of activities such as gardening and continue to focus on big business for economic growth. My health is so good now through gardening that I am able to be back in the workplace. Imagine if this effect could be replicated throughout the community. Surely that would be an economic benefit worth having.

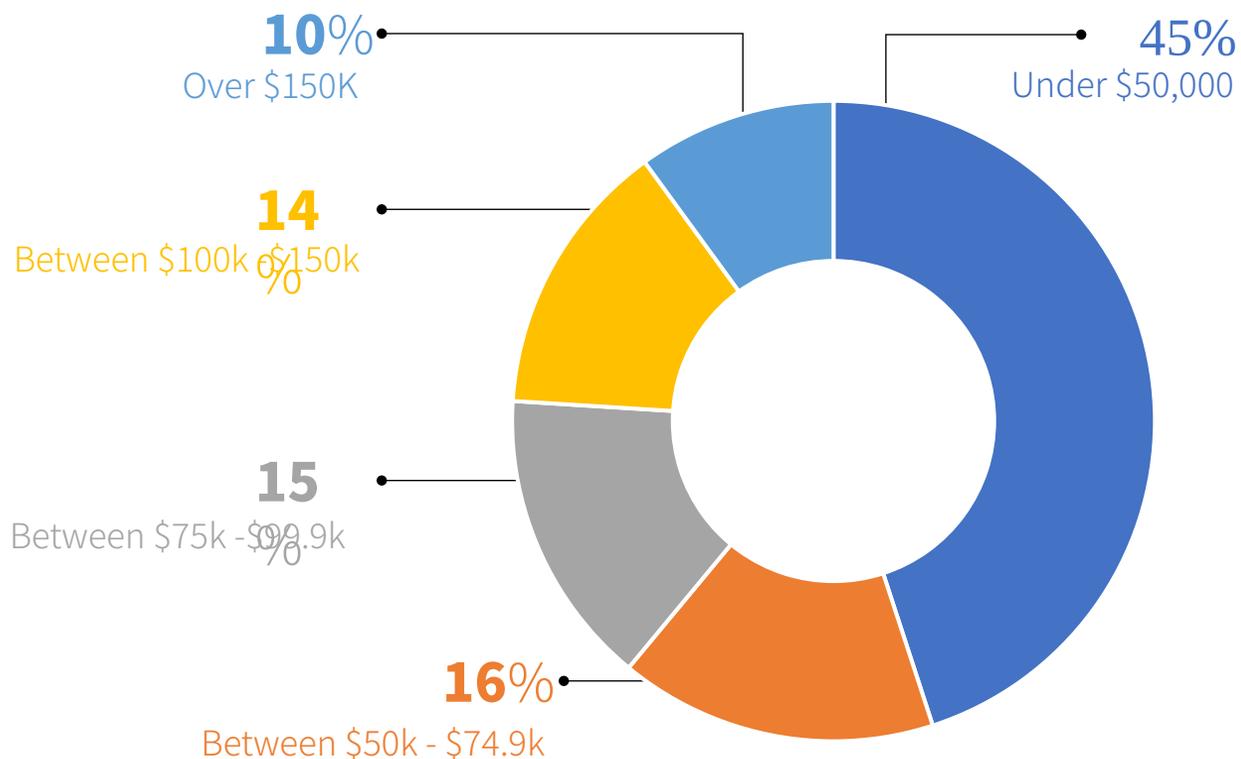
Low-income female gardener, Anglo-Australian 45-54, South Gippsland





Low-income households (under \$50K) are the most productive gardeners

Q23: Households growing more than 30% of their own food by income (n= 924)



“During COVID-19, the importance of growing my own food has been reinforced. We needed to isolate for health reasons and being able to find fresh food in my garden stretched out the need to go to the shops. Growing my own food helps with the budget now that I am no longer working. I have also found the benefits of swapping food and plants.”

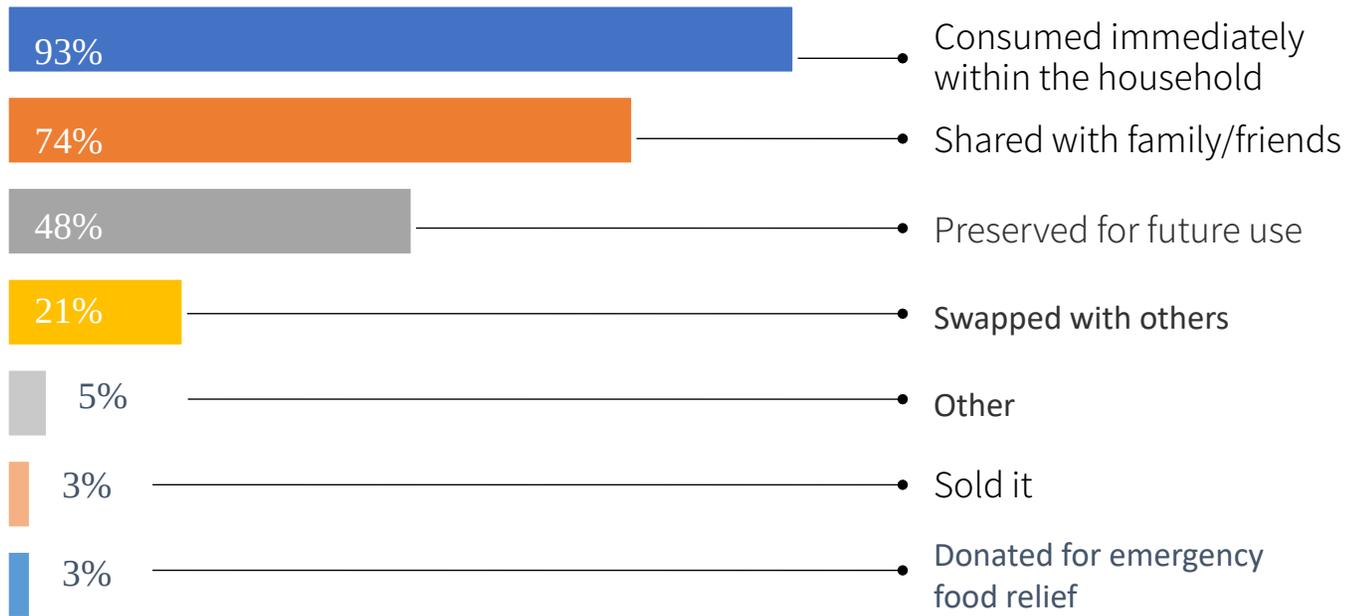
Low-income experienced female gardener, European, 55-64, western Sydney

“Being able to garden and have some food security means everything to our small family. For myself, it has allowed me to tackle family life with a healthier mental and physical state. For my family, it meant less risk (going to supermarkets) and less waste. Our community is happier and much closer now we have started swapping vegetables and resources.”

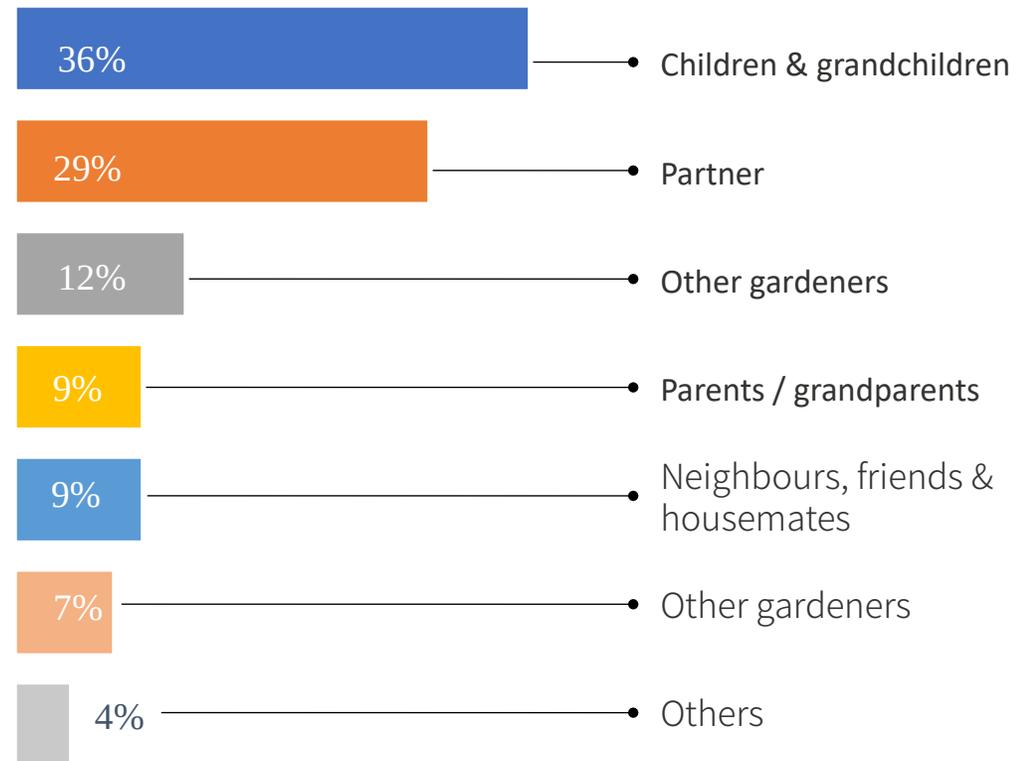
Low-income gardener, gender unspecified, East/Southeast Asian, 25-34, outside Hobart

Enjoying and sharing abundance

Q10: What have you done with the food you have grown in 2020? (n= 8662)

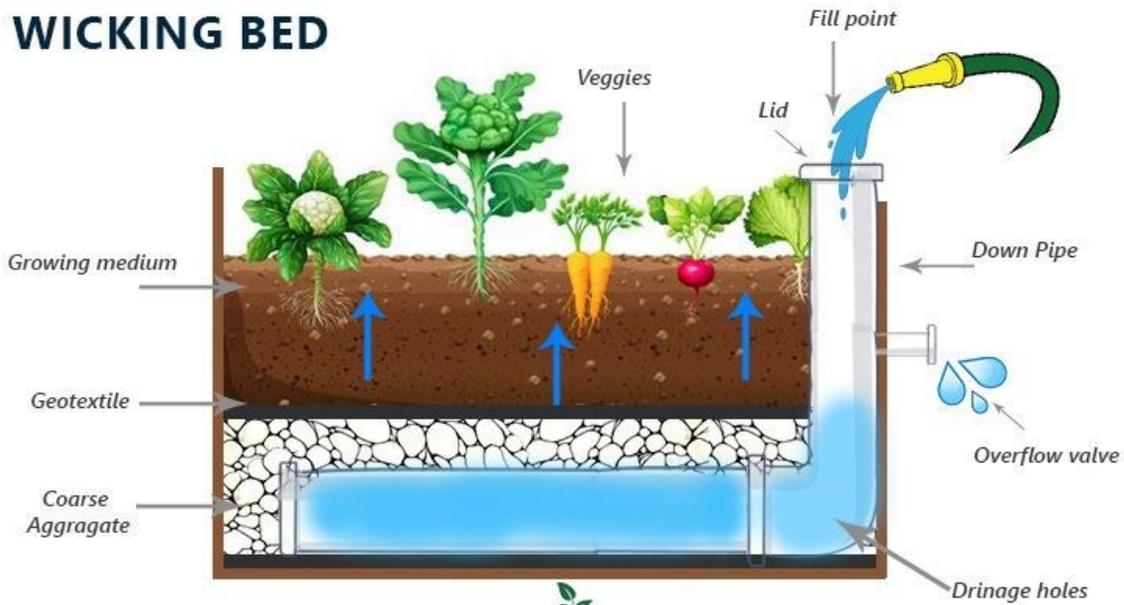


The social lives of gardeners: who do you garden with?



Saving Water

WICKING BED



By Gaias Organic Gardens



Biofilta
Food
Cube



WaterUps
wicking
solutions



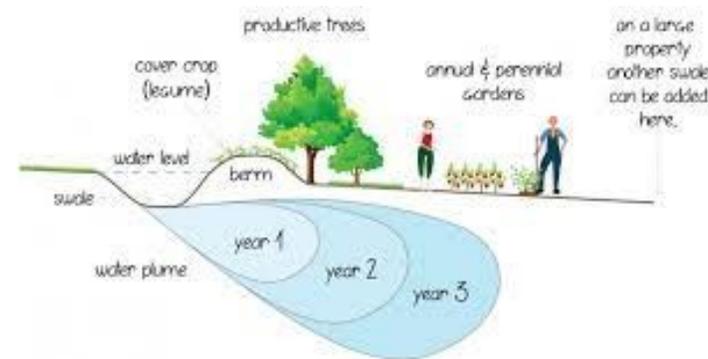
Saving Water



Drip Irrigation



Mulch



Swales

Churchill Learnings....

- Everyone is struggling with government support – exception: Wales, SF&G & Singapore
- Adequate funding is a major issue – exception: Czech Republic, Kokoza, Wales SF&G & Singapore
- Grant funding is restrictive and time consuming
- Climate change is very, very real and impacting gardening methods
- Missing piece of the puzzle is adequate legislation and policy to support urban gardening activities
- Communities are being transformed – with data to prove it
- Bottom up initiatives are very resilient, top down initiatives require longer incubation times and ongoing support – both are necessary
- Whilst allotment gardening is old, community gardening is relatively new in the EU so networks only just now being established
- Education is crucial for sector growth
- Communications are challenging – so many options!



Looking forward...

- CGA will work harder to establish good relationships with all levels of government
- We will work towards ensuring legislation and policy are supportive and facilitate the establishment of new gardens and maintenance of existing gardens
- We will develop new, up to date resources for the sector
- We will continue to develop and expand our volunteer network and evolve our communications to work with that
- We will continue to seek out appropriate funding to ensure we are able to achieve our aims
- We will maintain international ties to enable sharing of:
 - Best practice
 - Good programs
 - Shared educational opportunities



Together we are stronger!

- Register your event on the Urban Agriculture Month website for November
- Sign up for membership with CGA
- List your community garden on the CGA directory for free
- Participate in our upcoming survey
- Join us as a Regional Representative
- Tell all your friends how wonderful community gardening is!

