



Randwick Community Organic Garden

Paine Reserve, Cnr Rainbow & Botany Sts,
Randwick, Sydney NSW 2034

<https://sites.google.com/a/rcog.org.au/rcogpublic/>



Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/128944703851767/

Situated at the northern end of Paine Reserve, the 1080 square metre Randwick Community Organic Garden (RCOG) is a fenced area that has combined substantial community garden areas with allotments. The best way to find out more about us it to come to our monthly community working bees – held for 2 hrs on the third Sunday of every month – start 9am in summer, and 10am in winter.

History of the garden

RCOG made a start in 1993 as a tenant of the Randwick Community Centre in Bundock Street. But in April 2000, the Bundock Street site was lost with the redevelopment of the Department of Defense owned land. At the time we had 60 members of the community garden. Randwick City Council promised to provide RCOG with a new space to garden.



Paine Reserve is an open park that accommodates the local community with a designated soccer pitch, open space for playing and dog walking and an access way to Randwick Boys High and Rainbow Street Public School. The area used by RCOG is within the northern end of the reserve and its status was an undeveloped road reserve that allows access to the Scout Hall before rezoning for our purpose.

In November 2004, RCOG Inc signed a five-year lease with Randwick City Council after the site at Paine Reserve was finalised and a development application approved. Work began in earnest on building the Garden in July 2005 (see photo).

Our aims RCOG is a not-for-profit incorporated association where membership is open to all. RCOG is being created for, and is managed by, the local community. Through shared decision-making, problem solving and negotiation a strong sense of community can be achieved.

RCOG offers the opportunity for the local community:

- To access space to grow fresh veggies, herbs and flowers using organic gardening methods while enjoying the benefits of robust, outdoor health
- To participate in free educational workshops in sustainable gardening and creative environments
- To enjoy the social benefits of community garden membership; meet people from different segments of the community and develop friendships
- To improve our environment through involvement in a practical project that enhances our local open space as it offers simple solutions for environmentally friendly living and enhances our self-reliance.



First steps

The community areas were the first parts of the garden to be built. This was done through a series of training workshops. These included composting, no-dig gardening, organic gardening and permaculture principles, creating a mandala/ keyhole/herb spiral garden, seed saving and propagation. The actual workshops were organised in accordance with the wishes and needs of the members. Tiles were placed in the ground to delineate garden areas. This was done by the community over a period of several months.

After the community areas were created we built individual allotments for eligible members. There are currently thirty-five allotments and approximately seventy current Garden members (May 2012).



Uses



Some RCOG members 2007

Community gardens can offer the opportunity for people to undertake a varied form of recreation that brings vegetational diversity to public open space with low demands on resources. Community gardening has a positive social role to improve the knowledge of gardening whilst contributing to a positive connection to natural systems.

RCOG brings many lasting benefits to our community in the areas of health (nutrition and physical), social aspects and in particular education. Our garden is used as a learning venue for sustainable gardening practices. The process of organic gardening also allows for the education of waste conversion and minimisation, recycling, learning about natural systems, awareness and connection with nature, promotion of a healthy diet and lifestyle and the opportunity for people to be involved in their food production.

We aim to be a demonstration garden and set standards in sustainability that are increasingly valued and supported. As a member of the [Australian City Farms and Community Garden Network](http://communitygarden.org.au/) (<http://communitygarden.org.au/>) and through the Sydney Community Gardens Network, other gardening groups and interested parties from the wider community visit us.



Our present motto is the Chinese proverb: *He who plants a garden, plants happiness.* We are delighted that the RCOG has flourished into a successful, well-utilised and much-loved community garden.

MO'C RCOG Ctte: May 2012

