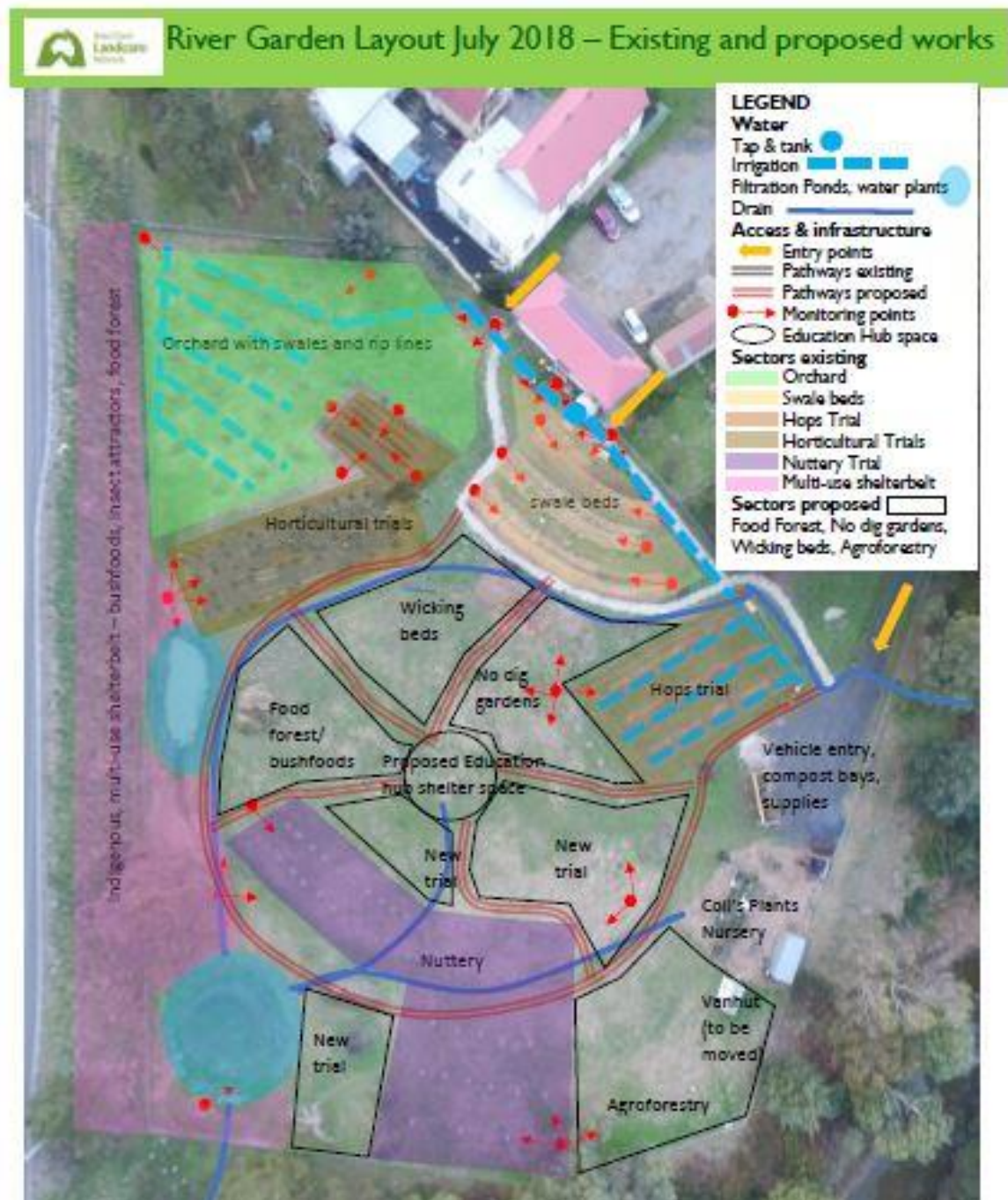


# The River Garden

Updated community plan and map - July 2018

A community garden, trials, innovation and education precinct on the banks of the Bass River.



# A Vision for the River Garden

This site will be a true community hub for learning and sharing information on sustainable ways to grow healthy, nutritious food

The River Garden is envisaged as a hub for education, trials and community, centred around regenerative soil management practices, nutrient dense growing techniques and local food systems, from the backyard garden to horticulture and broad acre farming.

We would like to reach out into the communities and cultures of Bass Coast and draw on their generations of expertise as well as look at new innovations to create community generated projects.

The Bass Coast Landcare Network also have a range of trials that will be run on the site as part of their effort to encourage innovation and diversification of agriculture in the Bass Coast. We envisage a cross pollination between the community garden and trials aspect of the project with outcomes and findings from each informing the other.

As well as being a community place for growing things, it will also be a place for learning and education with a regular program of workshops and school activities at areas of the site set up as outdoor classrooms. We hope to host regular volunteer days and eventually use the commercial kitchen in the Bass hall for cooking and preserving demonstrations with the wonderful produce from the garden.



## Guiding principles

### Horticultural Practice

- Organic and biologically centred chemical free approach
- Minimum waste
- Sharing of knowledge, ideas and resources
- Maximising energy flows and nutrient cycling on site
- Growing for nutrient density and long-term fertility
- Increasing soil volume over time
- Maximising production for available space, multiple use
- Use of local resources



### Community

- Collaborative and communal
- Respectful and friendly
- Tolerant, inclusive and embracing of differences
- Self-directed
- Working with multiple partners
- Sourcing and sharing of skills and knowledge from cultural traditions in our wider community

# July 2018 – Progress update

This document aims to give a snapshot of the site at this time, including past works, current layout and works in progress as well as ideas for the future of the River Garden from community feedback given to date. The map on the front page of this document gives an updated aerial photo with the proposed layout of the site, however we see the site evolving organically in response to ongoing community input and our successes and failures.

## Past projects, partnerships and collaborations

**Hops trial** Funded under the Demonstrating Sustainable Farm practices project, 2013-2018

**Bass Coast Landcare Public Fund** \$5000 for all weather access track and turnaround 2016.

**Vanhut** Bass Coast Shire Council Community Grants 2016 – \$4400 to purchase a Vanhut for the site.

**Sureway Work for the Dole** Support of 5-6 people and funding to employ a supervisor 2015/16

**AGL Community Partnership – Initial site setup** \$10,000 ‘Support for the River Garden Local food systems project’ assist path construction, drainage, fencing, site entry infrastructure – June 2017.

**Bass Coast Shire Council Community Grant – Initial site setup**

Bass Coast Shire Council Community Grants - \$2464 for fruit trees, plastic, irrigation – June 2017

**River Garden Community Launch day**

7<sup>th</sup> December 2017. Over 60 people attended a site tour, workshop on contour swales, espalier methods and a facilitated session to gather community input on future direction for the site.

**Growing Community Growing Food at the River Garden – hands on learning days**

Project: ‘River Garden – Community trialling Sustainable Agriculture in Bass Coast’ funded by the Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority. Dec 2017-July 2018.

*Four workshops on:* Land capability/planning, natural soil improvement, non-chemical weed control, composting trials, crop diversification, alternative crops, shelterbelts, food forest and bushfoods.

*On ground works included:* Swale beds, horticultural comparative trial beds, track works, irrigation, espalier trellis and compost bays. Planting of fruit trees, start of shelterbelt/bushfood areas and nuttery.

**Colls’s Plants Nursery now on site**

This year we have the fantastic addition of ‘Coll’s Plants’ a small commercial nursery run by Colleen Asling on site to supply us and the local community with vegetable and herb seedlings.

**Community Corrections Crew visits weekly**

We have formed a great partnership with Gippsland Community Correctional Services who are now sending a crew of between 5-10 people once a week to assist in establishing and maintaining the site. We welcome the CCS Work Teams and we are grateful for all the hard work they are doing.

## Pending funding application

**Suez Community Grants** – Funding for education hub and outdoor classroom space to hold new workshop series and schools based activities. We should find out about this in the next few months and if successful this will run from October 2018 onwards.



# Future workshop and site ideas based on community feedback

## Site Ideas

- Regular volunteer maintenance days
- Food forest/kids garden – connect to local schools
- Vegetable production and sharing
- Permaculture gardens and Wicking beds
- Bush foods and Aquatic plants trial
- Insectarium plantings
- Multiple use agroforestry plot
- And.... It's up to you!

## Current works in progress – we would love your help!

**Shelterbelt and bushfood planting** – work continues on planting shelterbelts around the site.

**Swale Beds** – Finishing construction and planting of vegetable crops and fruit trees continues.

**Horticultural crop trials** – This site will compare crops with different soil amendments and monitor results in partnership with Wonthaggi Chisolm TAFE Horticulture students.

**Volunteer program and Web page** – We are working on constructing a new page on our website and organising activities for a range of volunteers of all abilities.

**Workshop program** – We are investigating a range of options for running future workshops.



## Future Workshop Ideas

- Q & A sessions
- Master classes
- Permaculture design course
- Building growing beds
- Plant propagation
- Fruit trees: Pruning, espalier, grafting techniques
- Companion planting
- Microbial processes and nutrients in gardens
- Soil health/Compost/worms
- Natural pest control
- Growing fruit/veg/herbs in a home scale garden
- Niche crops as a business
- Bush tucker plant care
- Care of plantings
- Agroforestry
- Cooking and preserving demonstrations
- Sharing knowledge and resources
- Setting up community networks
- And.... It's up to you!

We are keen to hear from you with further ideas. If you are interested in running workshops on this site we would love to collaborate with you to get some great workshop days happening at the River Garden.

**Register your interest to volunteer or be on our mailing list for River Garden activities today!**

Email us at

[info@basscoastlandcare.org.au](mailto:info@basscoastlandcare.org.au)

with your name, contact details and what you would be interested in working on.

We will send updates in our email e-news and our new webpage on the River garden will be coming soon at <http://www.basscoastlandcare.org.au>

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