

Criteria for Sensory Garden plant selection Beachmere Community Garden Inc.

Among the objectives of BCG Inc. are the inclusion of all members of the community to participate in the garden and also to inspire people young and old to become more involved in healthy food production. It has been agreed by the membership that one way to achieve these objectives is to develop a sensory garden within the community garden space. However, to fulfil these objectives it will be necessary to select appropriate plant varieties. This document assists with the selection process by establishing a set of agreed criteria.

What is a sensory garden?

A sensory garden utilises plant varieties that stimulate the senses. These gardens have been shown to assist people with physical and intellectual disabilities, people recovering from injury (in particular head injuries) and also those suffering from dementia. A secondary benefit is that the array of sensory plants assists with introducing beneficial insects to the garden, therefore improving pollination and organic pest control.



Plants considered for the sensory garden must meet the following criteria

	Meets the following criteria	Examples to avoid
Toxicity	<u>Must be non-toxic</u> Some plant varieties have poisonous sap which could potentially leave dangerous residue on participants hands, especially when crushing leaves	Oleanders Easter Lily Trumpet plant
Potential to injure	<u>Plants will not cause physical injury</u> Plants should not have sharp spines, thorns, edges of leaves	Agaves Rose (use thornless varieties) Cacti
Allergenic	<u>Must not be a known trigger for allergies</u> Liaise with agencies such as the Asthma Foundation to determine the allergy potential of plants.	Some grass spp. Grevillia "Robyn Gordon"
Suited to area	<u>Plants to grow well in the Beachmere environment</u> Plants to tolerate coastal sub-tropical conditions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Summer temperatures • Humidity • Salt laden winds 	Plants from other climate zones in Australia (eg Alpine)
Irritants	<u>Plants with irritating sap or oils to be avoided</u> While not poisonous, some plants sap can be extremely irritating.	Chillies
Durable	<u>Plant must be hardy</u> Plants to tolerate constant touching and removal of leaves and flowers	Orchids Carnivorous plants
Non-invasive	<u>Plants are not declared weeds</u> Plants may be required to go to seed or fruit as part of the sensory experience, which could easily be dispersed by wind or local wildlife into nearby nature reserves.	Any plant declared as a weed by Government authority (eg, Asparagus fern could be useful for its feathered leaves but is classed a restricted invasive plant).

If a plant is found to not conform to these criteria, it must be removed immediately.

The following criteria are preferred but not essential

	Meets the following criteria	Examples
Multi use	<u>Plants have multiple sensory applications</u>	Borage – 1. Leaf texture, 2. flower smell, 3. leaf taste. 4. Attracts Blue banded bee for sound
Common	<u>Choose plants that are easy to obtain</u> Locally sourced,	Local nurseries and markets. Members' gardens
Size	<u>Plants suited to growing in a container</u> Dwarf or prostrate varieties to be used where available	Dwarf citrus spp. Prostrate Banksias (eg Roller Coaster)

Participants to the sensory garden are to understand that the plants have been carefully selected to not be hazardous however they **must** follow all instructions relating to the plants use. Children should be supervised at all times.

The following is a list of recommended plants that are suitable for a sensory garden in Beachmere.

Touch

Texture	Plant part	Example	
Soft	Leaves	Lambs ears	<i>Stachys byzantina</i>
	Leaves	Edible Asparagus	<i>Asparagus officinalis</i>
	Leaves/flower heads	Native Grasses – Purple Lea	<i>Pennstipie pennisetum</i>
Sharp/prickly	Leaves	Aloe	<i>Aloe vera</i>
	Flowers	Straw flowers	<i>Xerochrysum bracteatum</i>
	Fruit	African horned cucumber	<i>Cucumis metuliferous</i>
	Leaves	Pumpkin	<i>Curcubita spp.</i>
Bumpy	Fruit	K Lime, Makrut Lime	<i>Citrus hystix</i>
Rough	Seed	Banksia	<i>Banksia spp.</i>
	Leaves	Sandpaper fig	<i>Ficus coronata</i>
Smooth	Leaves	Banana	<i>Musa spp.</i>
	Fruit	Egg plant	<i>Solanum melongena</i>
	Nut	Macadamia	<i>Macadamia spp.</i>
Unusual/combo	Fruit	Dragon fruit	<i>Pitaya spp.</i>
	Flower	Artichoke	<i>Cynara cardunculus</i>
Moist	Plant	Moss	

Taste

Type	Plant part	Example	
Sweet	Leaves	Stevia, Sweet leaf	<i>Stevia rebaudiana</i>
	Leaves	Aztec sweet herb	<i>Phyla dulcis syn Lippia dulcis</i>
	Fruit	Berries –Blueberries Strawberries	<i>Vaccinum spp</i> <i>Fragaria spp.</i>
Honey	Flower	Borage	<i>Borago officinalis</i>
Aniseed	Leaves	Liquorice	<i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i>
Sour	Fruit	Acerola Cherry	<i>Malpighia emarginata</i>
	Leaves	Roselle, Sour leaf	<i>Hibiscus sabdariffa</i>
	Leaves	Sorrell	<i>Rumex acetosa</i>
	Fruit	Lemon tree	<i>Citrus limon</i>
Bitter	Leaves	Garlic chives	<i>Allium tuberosum</i>
	Leaves	Fish mint	<i>Houttuynia cordata</i>
Savoury			
	Fruit	Tomato	<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>
Chocolate	Fruit	Chocolate pudding plant	<i>Diospiros nigra</i>

Smell

Type	Plant part	Example	
Perfume	Leaves	Lavender	<i>Lavandula spp.</i>
Pineapple	Leaves	Pineapple sage	<i>Salvia elegans</i>
Chocolate	Flowers	Chocolate cosmos	<i>Cosmos atrosanguineus</i>
Smelly	Flower	Banksia	<i>Banksia praemorsa</i>
	Flower	Smelly socks	<i>Grevillia leucopteris</i>
			<i>Hakea denticulata</i>
			<i>Hibbertia scandens</i>
			<i>Tetralochea thymifolia</i>
Savoury	Leaves	Curry plant	<i>Helichrysum italicum</i>
	Seeds	Fennel	<i>Foeniculum vulgare</i>
Citrus	Leaves	Lemon scented Myrtle	<i>Backhousia citriodora</i>
	Leaves	Lemon Thyme	<i>Thymus citriodorus</i>
	Leaves	Lemon balm	<i>Melissa officinalis</i>
	Leaves	Eriostemon	<i>Eriostemon myoporoides</i>
Aniseed	Leaves	Aniseed tree	<i>Backhousia anisata</i>
Curry	Leaves	Curry tree	<i>Backhousia angustifolia</i>
Vanilla	Flowers	Heliotrope, "Cherry Pie"	<i>Heliotropium arborescens</i>
Juicy fruit gum	Leaves	Chefs Cap Correa	<i>Correa baeuerlenii</i>

Sound

	Example		Use
Stem	Bamboo	Clumping spp. only	Stems can be played like xylophone
Dried fruit/seeds	Gourds	<i>Cucubita spp.</i>	Shaken like maracas
Leaves	Pumpkin	<i>Cucubita spp.</i>	Crushing hollow stem
Leaves	Gum tree	<i>Eucalypt spp.</i>	Make a whistle by placing leaf between hands and blowing
Seed heads	Native grass	<i>Eg. Themeda triandra</i>	Wind through grass
Flowers	Salvias	<i>Salvia sp</i>	Attract bees to garden
Flowers	Banksia	<i>Banksia spp.</i>	Attract birds to garden

Sight

	Plant part	Example	
Yellow/orange	Flower	Sunflower	<i>Helianthus spp.</i>
Blue	Leaves	Baby Blue	<i>Eucalyptus pulverulenta</i>
Multi colour	Flowers	Salvia	<i>Salvia spp.</i>
Red	Fruit	Coffee plant	<i>Coffea arabica</i>