

Community
Gardens Ireland



▼
National Survey
of Gardens
2021

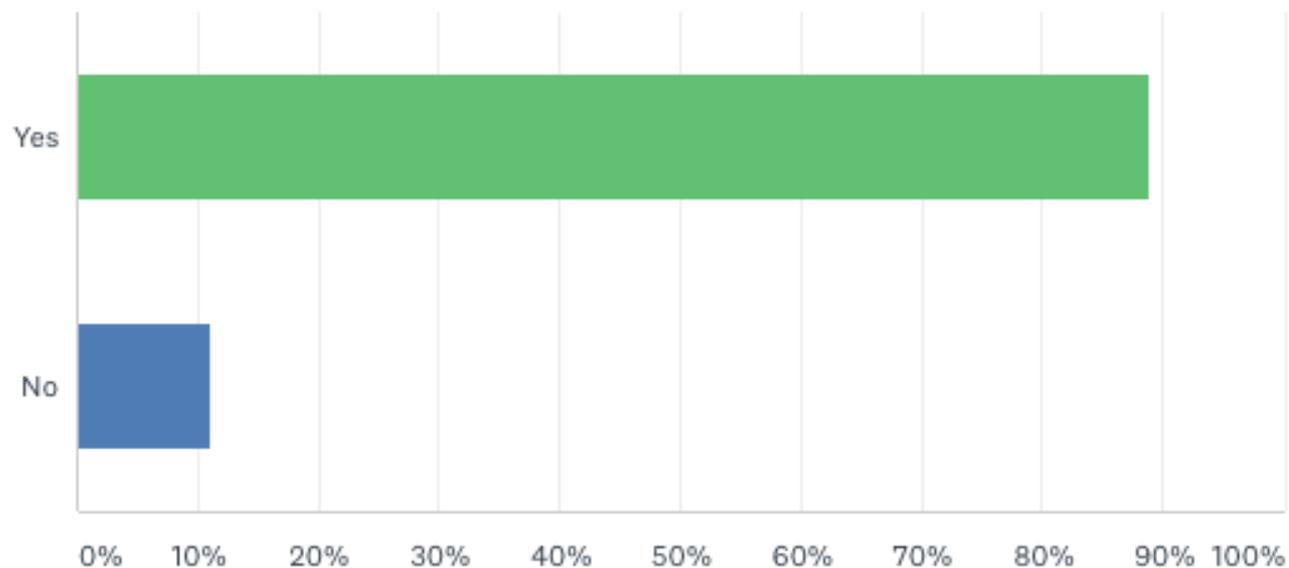


Number of Gardens in Ireland?

- 113 gardens & allotments registered with CGI
(<http://cgireland.org/>)
- 46 gardens & allotments registered with Dublin
Community Growers
(<https://www.dublincommunitygrowers.ie/gardens-list/>)
- 72 gardens, allotments farms & organisations registered
with Social Farms & Gardens in NI
- 37 answered survey (over 30% of CGI members, which
we're told is a good response for research
questionnaires!)

- Does your group currently have a site for your community garden or allotments?

Answered: 36 Skipped: 1





How long has your garden been in existence?

- From 17 years to less than one year
- 19 out of 37 gardens in existence for more than 5 years
- 4 established within the last year

- 285 years - Ards Walled Community Project in Donegal!

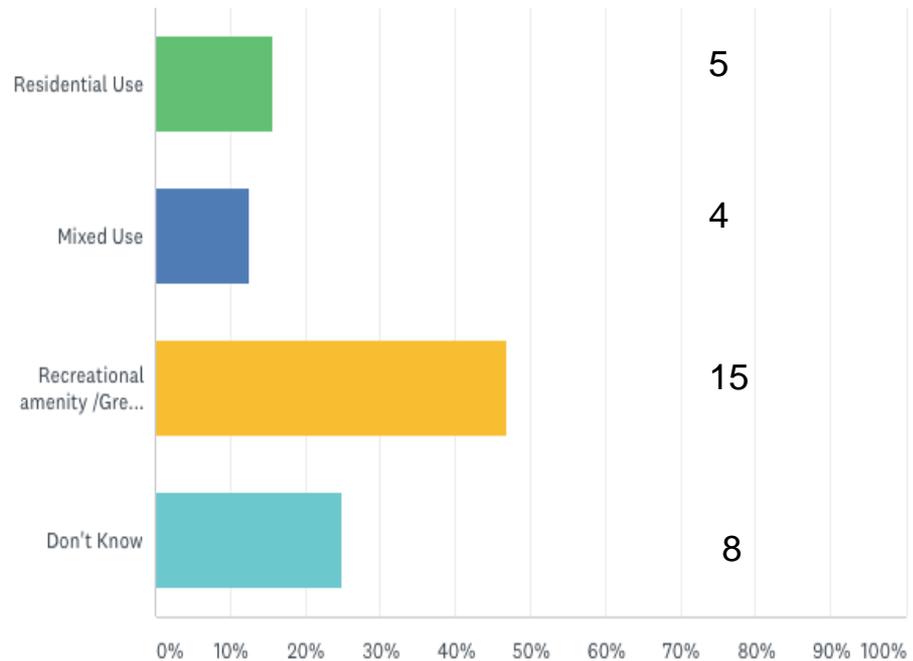


How does your garden grow?

- How many members did you have at the start of 2020
 - Membership varied from 2 to 240 with an average of 10 to 30 members. Some more active than others
 - The Growery in Birr Co. Offaly, Ireland's first Urban Food Commons held 37 events throughout the year 2019 with a total attendance of 480
 - Mud Island CG in Dublin's North Strand held 7 events 2019 averaging 100-200 people at each event
- How many members since March 2020?
 - The majority of gardens did not grow membership during the past year, primarily because of Covid

Is your site zoned for residential use, mixed use, or recreational amenity / green use?

Answered: 32 Skipped: 5





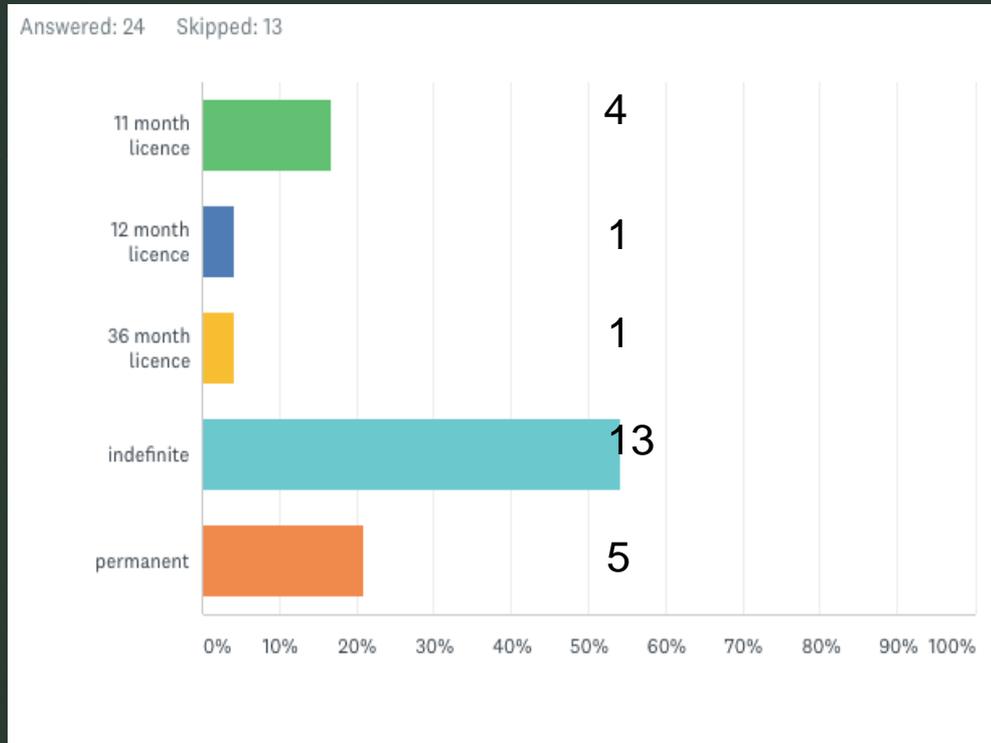
Who owns the land your garden is on?

- Majority on land owned by local councils (Belfast, Cork, Donegal, Dublin (7), Fingal, Galway, Kildare (2), Leitrim, North Down, Waterford)
- 8 owned by community organisations/town
- 5 by local businesses or farmers
- 4 by church organisations
- The rest a mixture of abandoned land/ sold to private developer by DCC/ not sure

What kind of licence do you have?

Under 'OTHER', 8 said they'd no fixed agreement although some were in discussion for one

One had a 10-year licence (3 years to go) and another had a 5-year licence



Source of Funding — Answers were wide & varied, indicative of hard work gardens put in to survive...

- Local County Councils
- CLÁR programme grant (Ceantair Laga Árd-Riachtanais - for small-scale infrastructural projects in rural areas)
- Community Services programme
- SICAP Programme (Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme)
- Community Environment Action Fund (CEAF) (Local Agenda 21)
- Community Enhancement Programme (CEP) via LCDC
- Local funding (e.g. Changemakers /Local Development Partnerships)
- Heritage Lottery Fund
- Small grants from various sources
 - Annual Applefest Grant
 - Waste prevention grant scheme
 - Tidy Towns
- Fundraising /Voluntary collections/hosting open days
- Market (affected by Covid);
- Seed swap/donation for seeds/seedlings
- Donations of tools/seeds
- Membership fees- ranged from €5 to €50

The main issues facing your garden for 2021?

- Largest single issue raised by gardens was the impact of COVID-19 and problems in maintaining gardens and keeping people safe (20)
- 10 raised issue of lack of funds for various projects including insurance and garden infrastructure/sheds/polytunnels
- 7 raised issue of need to involve more volunteers, including skilled volunteers
- 3 raised issue of retention/insecurity of tenure/site rezoned for housing
- 2 raised issue of availability of seeds because of Brexit

- CGI issued guidelines during the first lockdown – (one restriction that keeps changing is the number that can meet outdoors – under Level 5 it's 2)

Social Farms & Gardens
 NI good source of info
www.farmgarden.org.uk/



Coronavirus COVID-19

COMMUNITY GARDEN GUIDELINES

All garden members should liaise with their garden committee to access garden, many restrictions are in place and all members may not be able access the garden at present

Enjoy and respect the garden while we ensure we all stay safe and protecte and ensure we maintain our beautiful and well loved garden

- ▶ It is important to be aware of Public Health restrictions and guidance
- ▶ Social distancing, hygiene measures and coughing and sneezing etiquette must always be observed.
- ▶ Volunteers should work at least 2 metres apart – the number of volunteers will be dictated by the size of the garden, bearing in mind the Government guidelines allowing "up to 4 people not of the same household to meet outdoors while maintaining strict social distancing"
- ▶ Wash or sanitise hands before and after unlocking the gates to garden where relevant.
- ▶ Wash your hands regularly in the garden.
- ▶ Use your personal hand sanitise there are no hand washing facilities in the garden.
- ▶ Do not wash your hands in the water trough.
- ▶ Ideally people should bring their own garden tools. Otherwise, when finished using tools sanitise the handles.
- ▶ Avoid going to the garden if you are particularly vulnerable, if you have coronavirus symptoms or a family member is self-isolating.

Contact
<http://cgireland.org/> <http://dublincommunitygrowers.ie/>
<https://www.facebook.com/cgireland.org/>
<https://www.facebook.com/DublinCommunityGrowers>

**We will get through this together
Keep Sowing & Growing**
 Community Gardens Ireland Committee

Are there any issues or points of information that you would like to see addressed at the general meeting?

- **Lockdown**

- What are the current restrictions on community garden work? Can we open our garden to public within certain hours during the week after 5th March 2021?
- How to keep momentum in this time

- **How to grow numbers** – Attracting new members

- We have 51 plots but not all in use . We did get new holders last year. We have set up a WhatsApp group to let people know of meetings clean up days, but always the same few turn up or reply..

- **Fund raising** for everyday running of the garden - How other gardens manage to run the gardens, not just local authority grants

- **The Issue of Insurance** - Insurance support

- **Seed Saving**

- The issue of not even organic community gardens being permitted to erect polytunnels within **SAC areas** (special area of conservation)
- Be great to have a **Whatsapp Group** to share tips and information across Ireland

Are there any issues or points of information that you would like to see addressed - 2

- **How can we lobby** for unused land to be used temporarily for community purposes; lobby government to allow more space for allotments/community gardens nationwide
- **Policy** needed for community land provision for mental and physical health during Covid and after – on public land (local authorities and state bodies) and private land (taxation reduction or CAP funding allocation for farmers based on community garden or allotment use)
- **How can we encourage** Community Gardens (even small ones, little orchards) in all housing estates around the country?
- **Good PR needed** for Community Gardens - Newspaper articles - value to communities / defeating anti social behaviour / mental health / building communities / nutrition / obesity / food awareness
- **Submissions** to City & County Development Plans to promote more community gardens

Are there any issues or points of information that you would like to see addressed - 3

- **Security** for community gardens, **guidelines** for their use and a 'go to' person within county/ city councils who deals with community gardens - need for a local Authority / govt supported service that can deliver **basic supports** for accountancy, tax, finance, grant support etc
- There is a role for land to be permanently set up for allotments and community gardens - currently there is no funding stream open to purchase land for community use.
- In the coming years, local authorities will reduce amount of available land due to increase in building for social housing (a good thing). This will lead to squeeze in urban areas on gardens & allotments, unless **long-term plan & funding** in place for such essential facilities.
- To achieve this, CGI should consider making a **pre budget submission** to this effect to propose a yearly **new funding scheme for the capital purchase of land by local authorities purely for outdoor community use.**

CGI Response to Survey Findings

Existing Legislation

Local Government Act, 2001:

Amenity, recreation and other functions.

- 67.—(1) In accordance with and subject to section 66 , a local authority may take such measures, engage in such activities or do such things (including the incurring of expenditure) as it considers necessary or desirable to promote the interests of the local community in relation to the matters indicated in subsection (2).

Note: Acquisition of Land (Allotments) Acts, 1926 & 1934 were repealed in 1994, however, the Labourers Cottages and Allotments (Ireland) Act, 1882 remains in force (but is obsolete).

Opportunity to update rather than repeal?

- (iv) civic improvements,
- (v) general environmental and heritage protection and improvement,
- **(vi) allotments, fairs and markets, and related amenities, facilities and services,**
- (vii) the public use of amenities (both natural and made or altered by human intervention), and
- (viii) the promotion of public safety.



Existing Policy?

- Excellent community gardens & allotments in Ireland, but the overall numbers are poor compared to international standards
- No protection in law for a specific allotments or community garden
- No duty for local authorities to provide community growing space if requested
- No requirement for local authorities to use idle land temporarily
- No guidance given to local authorities or local landowners
- No single department in charge of allotments or community gardens
- No requirement to keep a waiting list

.....change is needed!



Working with Government

Programme for Government Our Shared Future

Programme for Government – Our Shared Future

government and emerging EU policy.

- Establish an Independent Agriculture Appeals Review panel in legislation, as a priority, and ensure that the panel includes participants with practical knowledge and experience of farming.

International Market Diversification and Trade

As Ireland is a small open economy, exporting food and drinks produce to over 180 countries internationally, we recognise the importance of international markets and trade.

We will:

- Seek to protect existing markets and open new markets

We will:

- Promote short, efficient routes to market that connect small food producers to the consumer and provide advisory, investment and marketing support for those who wish to diversify into new products.
- Support local authorities to expand the number of farmers' markets, farm shops and food emporiums; and support the formation of community-owned markets in all towns, showcasing local food produce from local farmers, growers, and food producers.

- Work with local authorities and local communities to develop community gardens, allotments, and urban orchards.

- Encourage schools and colleges to provide access to land where students can grow their own food.

- Support the small food producer, providing support for

prizes and investment in growing farmers to sell their wider domestic markets. es have been successful arkets from family-farm

procurement policies for urage the availability of ood in public sector areas vernment buildings, and

the sector.

prisons.

- Work with local authorities and local communities to develop community gardens, allotments, and urban orchards.

COVID-19 Resilience & Recovery 2021 The Path Ahead

- A programme of "citizen empowerment" wellbeing activities and initiatives will be delivered by Local Authorities with local partners, including activities supporting healthy living, physical activity, community food, creativity, managing chronic diseases and positive ageing.

Issues from survey for Incoming Committee

- How do we help enable more short-term solutions to assist with the mental health impact of COVID-19?
- What is the long-term plan for Community Gardens & Allotments?
- How do we make funding sustainable?
- How do we increase the number of community growing spaces in Ireland?
- How do we “move the needle” to make more community growing spaces permanent?
- How do we increase the protection for community gardens & allotments?

Community Gardens Ireland Contact details

- **Email:**
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<https://www.facebook.com/cgireland.org>
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<https://www.facebook.com/groups/communitygardennetwork>

