



Cultivating Community Gardener Feedback Report

Our 3rd Annual Survey conducted across Public Housing
Community Gardens
July 2024



**Cultivating
Community**
Growing a better food future

"The staff are wonderful I am grateful for all that I receive"



FEEDBACK ON OUR COMMUNITY GARDENS PROGRAM

Gardener's Feedback Survey 2024

The Annual Gardener Feedback Survey was conducted between May and July 2024. This is our 3rd year conducting this survey as part our 2022-2025 strategy, with some of the goals being to demonstrate our impact, shape our decisions and actions as a result of evidence gathering and implement a people first approach. The results from this survey in particular, will help us understand how we can better support our gardeners and improve our services within each community garden. This year again, in an effort to ensure impartiality and prevent any bias in our gardeners' responses, the survey was conducted by the Social Connection Team, independently from the Garden Team.

Similar to last year, the survey was collected through a combination of in-person events at some of the community gardens and distributed via text message to all other gardeners. In an effort to make the survey accessible to as many gardeners as possible, interpreters attended the in-person events and the surveys were available in the six most common languages: English, Russian, Chinese, Turkish, Arabic, and Vietnamese.

This year, in-person survey collection events were conducted in gardens that have recorded lower levels of attendance during the weekly/fortnightly Garden Team visits.

This was done in order to collect feedback information from gardeners who might be less inclined to participate in an online survey collection or might not have had the opportunity to give their personal comments and observations related to garden operations previously.

Unfortunately, only a few gardeners attended these events, which resulted in a lower survey response rate this year.



“Very good work, keep it up”



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Overall survey insights

- The Winter Feedback Survey was distributed to a total of 660 gardeners and we received 112 responses, a 17% response rate. This represents a 1% decrease compared to last year. Only 20 answers were collected by the Social Connection Team during in person events organised in some of the community gardens. After sending the online survey by text message, a further 92 answers were collected via the online survey form.
- 65.2% (73) of the gardeners chose to respond via the English Survey which is a 6.3% increase in English response compared to last year's survey (58.9%).
- Of those who responded in a language other than English,
 - 17% (19) responded via the Vietnamese Survey
 - 11.6% (13) responded via the Simplified Chinese Survey
 - 3.57% (4) responded via the Turkish Survey
 - 1.79% (2) responded via the Russian Survey
 - 0.89% (1) responded via the Arabic Survey
- 55.36% (62) responded to the question asking for further comments on how we can improve our service, with 34% (21) expressing positive comments, 61% (38) providing neutral feedback, and 5% (3) sharing negative comments.
- To check if face to face survey collections influenced the way gardeners might reply to the survey questions, results obtained from the online surveys should normally be compared to the results collected in person via a Chi2 test. However, because of the low number of in person survey collected, it was not possible to accurately perform the Chi2 test.
- A Chi square test was used to test if the variations we observed between 2023 and 2024 were significantly different or just due to normal fluctuations as a result of our sampling method. Each significant differences will be highlighted in this report with a yellow star.

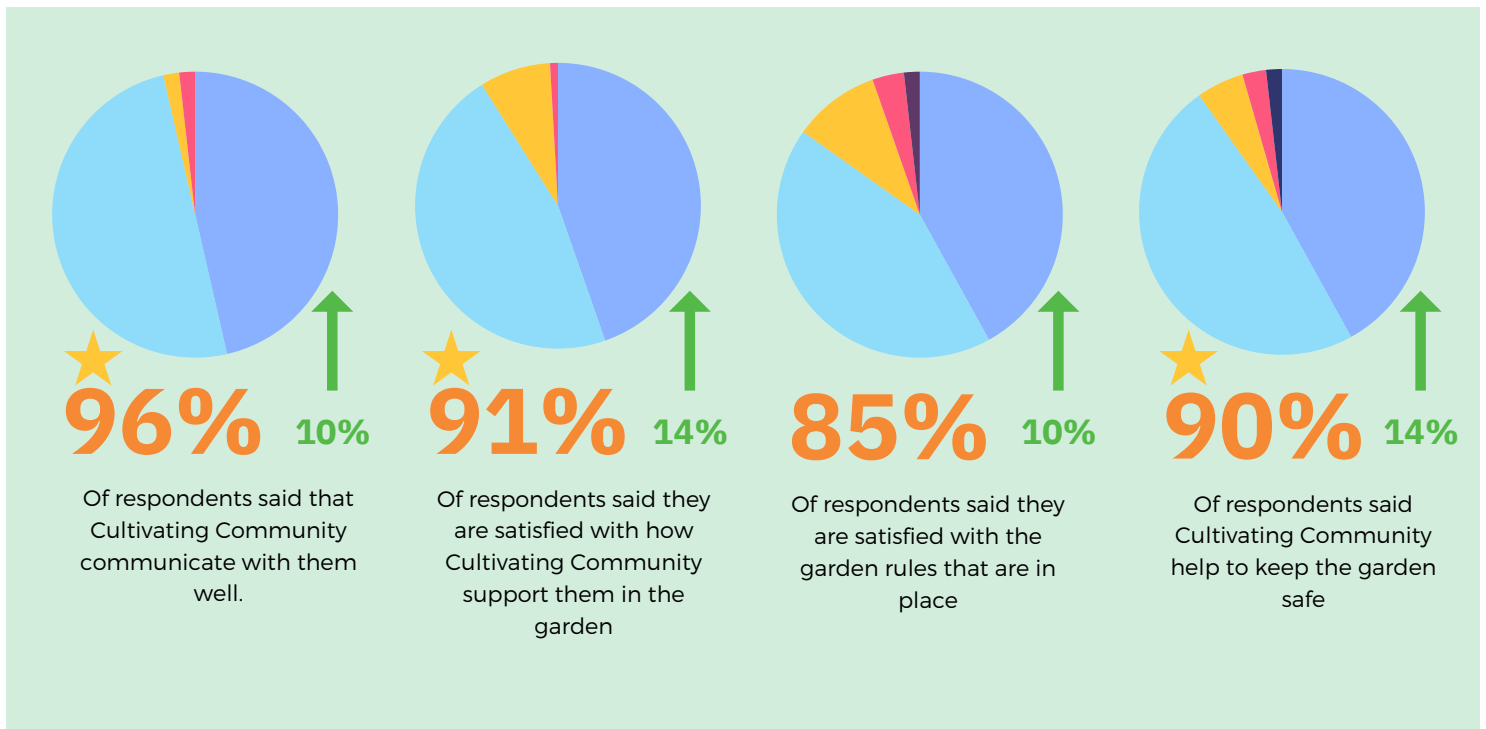


".. they are very helpful, thoughtful and go out of their way to help us .."



FEEDBACK ON OUR COMMUNITY GARDENS PROGRAM

How Cultivating Community supports the garden 2024 vs. 2023

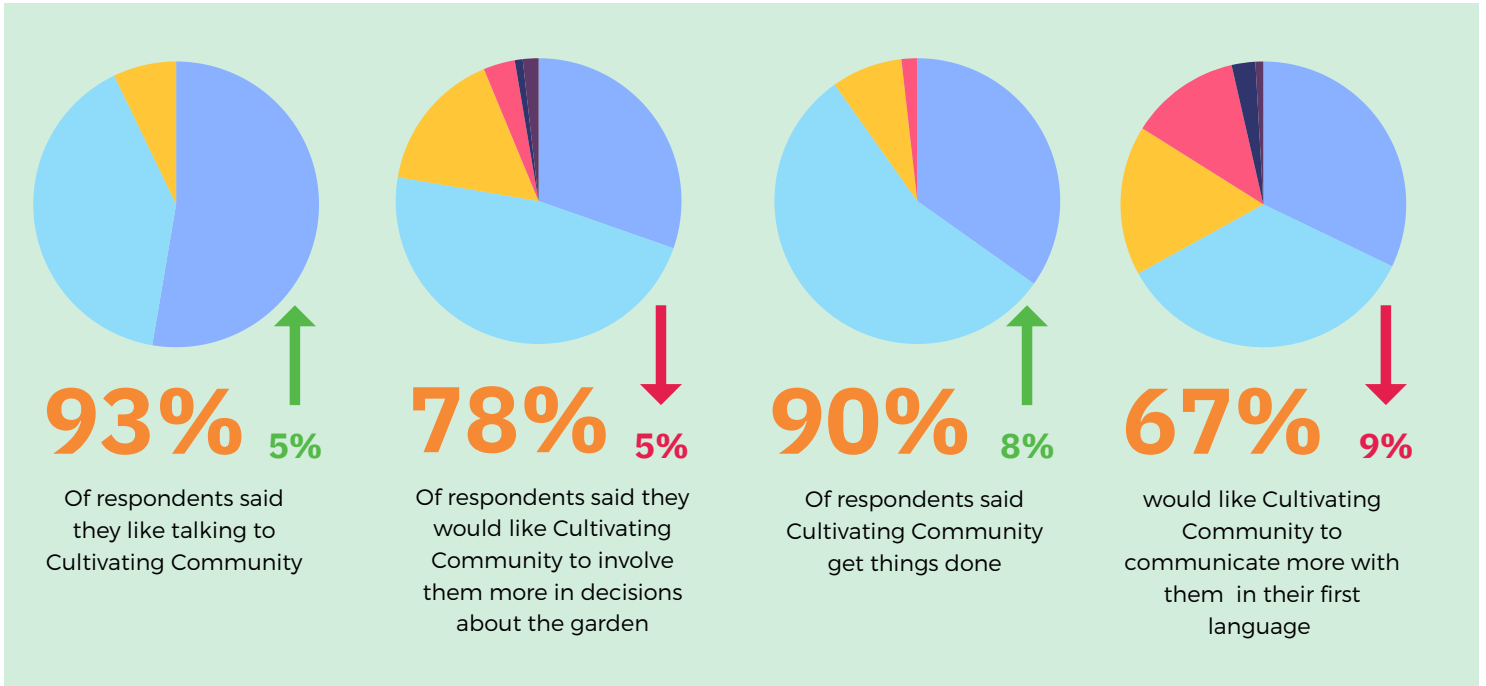


● Strongly Agree ● Agree ● Not Sure ● Disagree ● Strongly disagree ● Blank ↑ Increase ↓ Decrease ■ No change

This year, there has been a positive significant increase in the number of gardeners who agree or strongly agree that Cultivating Community communicate with them well, support them well in the garden and help keep the garden safe. This year more human resources have been allocated to our community gardens, thanks to extra funding from Homes Victoria. Both the Garden Team, Maintenance Team and Social Connection Team have seen their workforce increase, allowing us to deliver our services more effectively.

More gardeners are also satisfied with the garden rules in place. This could be a direct result of the review of the Community Garden Rules and Guidelines which was conducted in 2023 and involved consultations with a large number of gardeners, interpreters and the offices of housing.

How Cultivating Community supports the garden 2024 vs. 2023



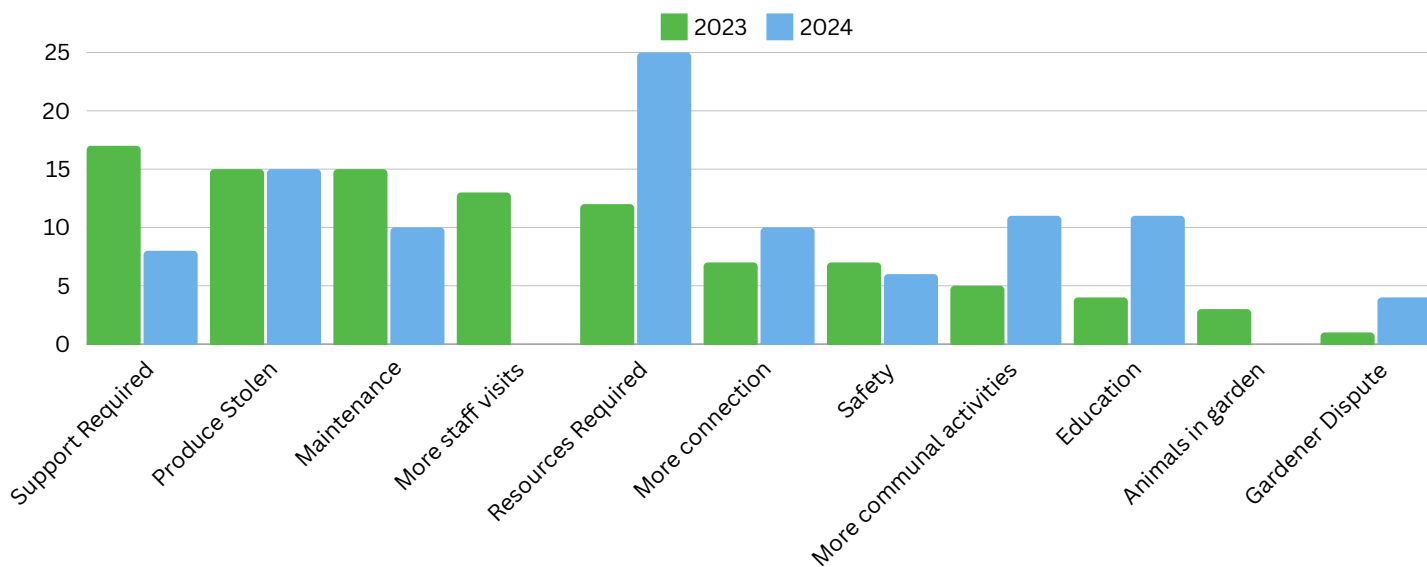
● Strongly Agree
 ● Agree
 ● Not Sure
 ● Disagree
 ● Strongly disagree
 ● Blank
 ↑ Increase
 ↓ Decrease
 ■ No change

This year, we've recorded an increase in the number of gardeners who agree or strongly agree that they like talking to Cultivating Community and that we get things done.

The decrease in the number of gardeners who agree or strongly agree that they would like to be more involved in decisions about the garden could be a sign that since last year some gardeners are more satisfied with the way Cultivating Community has included them in the decision-making process. This could also be a reflection of our previous findings from the spring wellbeing survey that more garden members just enjoy gardening alone and are not interested in being included in other garden related matters.

The decrease observed in the number of gardeners wanting Cultivating Community to communicate more with them in their first language could be interpreted as a result the increased effort being put into ensuring that most communication is available in the most common languages. Cultivating Community also ensure access to interpreter services when needed, in order to encourage an equal opportunity of participation for all our gardeners.

Note however that none of the changes on this page are significant, according to the Chi2 test results, meaning that they could be the results of normal fluctuations, resulting from the sample of gardeners that have provided their feedback compared to last year.



Further Comments

Resources required:

25% of requests were for more resources to be provided to the gardeners such as equipment, seeds, seedlings, compost and fertiliser. This number has doubled compared to last year as only 12% of requests were for extra resources.

Theft Issues:

Similar to last year, 15% of the comments received in the feedback survey were reports from gardeners who have had their produce stolen or have requested for more work to be done by Cultivating Community to prevent theft from happening in their gardens.

Connection, Education and communal activities:

10%-11% of comments received were from gardeners expressing interest in having more communal activities promoting social connection and education such as workshops, barbecues, celebrations, working bees and meetings.

Staff time and support:

Staff time and support requests have significantly reduced since last year with staff support requests halving compared to last year (17% in 2023 vs 8% in 2024) and no request being received for extra staff visits in 2024 (13% in 2023)

Safety:

Very similar to last year, 6% of gardeners voiced concerns regarding safety issues, with requests for extra lightning and safety cameras to be installed in some gardens.

"..thanks to the friendly staff who are always helpful with informing me and assisting me with my gardening needs"

“Very good to meet neighbours and new friends. Don't feel lonely”



FEEDBACK ON OUR COMMUNITY GARDENS PROGRAM

Conclusion

This has been our third year conducting the Winter Gardener Feedback Survey. The response rate to the survey this year was slightly lower than the one last year but it is worth noting the significant increase in the response rate to the online survey, sent to each gardener by text message (13.9% of gardeners in 2024 vs 10% in 2023).

This could indicate that after 3 years, gardeners:

- trust the legitimacy of Cultivating Community communicating and sending surveys via text message to help improve our services
- understand that the collection of data plays a vital role in ensuring that our services are adapted to the gardeners needs
- trust that Cultivating Community will take their feedback into consideration for future decisions

The general increase in the gardeners' satisfaction that Cultivating Community help to keep the garden safe, are supporting them well in the garden and are communicating well with them reflects the wonderful work that the Garden Team, Maintenance Team and Social Connection Team have been able to achieve this year, thanks to extra funding from Homes Victoria. This has enabled Cultivating Community Staff to ensure that our services, responsiveness and communication was timely and relevant.





What we will do next:

- Give opportunities to garden members to be more involved in any decision-making process related to the gardens by organising regular Co-design sessions with the support of our social connection team in order to create solutions that are more relevant, efficient and tailored to each garden
- Regularly organise opportunities for gardeners to express their opinions and concerns and come up with plans to improve their experience in the gardens
- Organise more events throughout the year with the support of our social connection and our workshop delivery teams. Workshops, food swap events, education on when to grow certain foods are some of the ideas that have been suggested by garden members
- Enhance gardener input by encouraging gardeners to take on an active role during annual garden planning meetings and collectively decide on the actions to be implemented and agreed timelines for delivery
- Optimize the use of communal beds as shared spaces with the aim to promote social connection, increase the amount of food grown in each garden and ultimately reduce theft from happening in private plots
- Raise with Homes Victoria the results of this survey and ask for a test garden with improved security options in the Fy24/25Funding

