

## Good Food Dunedin Star Article

By Sophie Carty, Health Promotion Specialist, WellSouth

Community gardens can promote healthy eating and active living in our communities. They are places where neighbours and residents can get together to grow plants, vegetables, and fruits and, depending on local laws, keep bees and raise chickens or other livestock and poultry.

Community gardens can also provide residents with the opportunity to learn gardening skills and increase their physical activity. In addition, they can build community spirit, beautify open spaces and make unused spaces productive. They add to the economic vitality of neighbourhoods, improve safety, and provide environmental benefits to the community at large.

However, garden establishment and maintenance requires hard work, and success is not guaranteed. A successful community garden requires active community involvement, time, passion, a suitable site and adequate resources. How and where the food and resources are distributed, and cultural and taste preferences, are also important if we are going to help those who need it most.

There are lots of community gardens in and around Dunedin. If you are interested in getting involved please get in contact with the gardens below – they are always looking for an extra hand whether it is in gardening or promotion. You might even pick up some great tips for your home garden!

To improve people's health garden initiatives also need to be part of a wider healthy and resilient food system, such as learning about how to prepare food, knowledge of healthy eating, or changing the local food environment. WellSouth is working in some of these spaces, for example by advocating to local government on healthy food provision. We also run free healthy lifestyle courses where you can learn all about healthy food and lifestyle changes. Please contact WellSouth on 03 477 1163 if you are interested in finding out more.

Dunedin has many other people and organisations working on great initiatives to foster a more resilient and healthy food system, and the Good Food Dunedin Alliance is working to support and improve this. Visit [www.goodfooddunedin.co.nz](http://www.goodfooddunedin.co.nz) for more information.

To find your nearest community garden, and for more information on low cost food, transport and healthy eating services visit: <https://www.wellsouth.org.nz/assets/wellbeing/LowCostFoodMaps.pdf> or [goo.gl/5LtUoN](http://goo.gl/5LtUoN).

*Good Food Dunedin is a Dunedin City Council-led initiative, supported by individuals, communities, organisations and businesses who share a vision to transform Dunedin into a thriving, food-resilient city.*