

Role Scaffold — Head Gardener - Soil — Uey Kai Garden, DCCG

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Status: Draft — to be confirmed with whoever holds the role.

Template: DCCG Role Scaffold Template.

Purpose of the Scaffold

The Head Gardener - Soil looks after the garden's soil — feeding the beds, mulching, watching what the soil is doing across the seasons. One of five Head Gardener roles. Holds horticultural knowledge in this area and votes with the other four on garden-wide horticultural decisions (decision making scaffold).

Why This Matters

The Quotes Pack names Grandpa's Garden Mix from KLS as the starting fill. After that, ongoing maintenance is the gardeners' work. Without a Head Gardener - Soil, soil care drifts. Beds get crops taken out without nutrients put back in. The Head Gardener - Soil's attention keeps beds productive year on year.

Outcomes of the Scaffold

Poor Outcome. Soil care happens reactively when crops fail. By year three, the beds need to be re-filled because the original mix has been depleted.

Expected Outcome. Soil is fed steadily — compost from on-site worked back in, sheep wool dags as mulch, occasional supplements when the Tender judges they're needed.

Excellent Outcome. Soil improves year on year. The working group can see it (darker, looser, more worms) and the crops show it.

Planks of the Scaffold

1. Feed the beds

Purpose of the Plank. Add compost. Add mulch. Keep the soil fed.

Why This Matters. A bed that produces a crop has given up nutrients. Without feeding, it produces less the next year, and less the year after that.

Poor Outcome. Beds are planted and harvested without being fed.

Expected Outcome. Compost from on-site goes into beds between plantings. Sheep wool dags (in-kind from local farms, named in the Quotes Pack) mulch through the season.

Excellent Outcome. Soil quality improves.

2. Hold the spray-free, organic standard

Purpose of the Plank. The application names spray-free and organic. The Head Gardener - Soil is the role most likely to be offered a shortcut (a synthetic fertiliser, a non-organic amendment) and holds against it.

Why This Matters. A spray-free garden that quietly takes in non-organic inputs has lost the standard.

Poor Outcome. Someone brings something synthetic; the Tender doesn't catch it.

Expected Outcome. The Tender knows what's coming in. Declines non-organic kindly.

Excellent Outcome. The standard is held consistently. The community knows what the garden accepts and what it doesn't.

3. Teach what you know

Purpose of the Plank. Soil knowledge passes by showing — here's what good compost looks like, here's what soil that needs feeding feels like.

Why This Matters. Soil care is more felt than written.

Poor Outcome. Soil work happens when the Tender's there; otherwise it doesn't.

Expected Outcome. Whoever's at a working bee gets shown some soil care.

Excellent Outcome. Other gardeners feel confident to act on their own observations.

4. Hold the role as a tender, not an operator

Purpose of the Plank. non operator norm applies. The Soil Tender holds knowledge about soil. They don't run the soil side by personal authority. Decisions about buying amendments, changing the spray-free standard, or any cross-cutting soil matter go through the Head Gardener vote.

Why This Matters. It's easy to drift into operator behaviour — "I'll just take care of the soil." The Plank says don't.

Poor Outcome. The Tender does it all; nobody else thinks about soil.

Expected Outcome. The Tender brings the working group into soil work.

Excellent Outcome. A new Head Gardener - Soil could take over and the practice would continue.

Values

Three values: **feed what feeds you** (the soil that grows the food gets fed in return); **the spray-free standard is held**; and **patience with what soil does** (soil improves on its own time).

See also: governance, decision making scaffold, horticultural scaffold template, volunteer, non operator norm, pattern disruption norm.