

Over the last 12 to 18 months we have been discussing future Garden needs with many people involved in on-the-ground gardening at WCG. One consistent theme that has come through is the need to increase our mechanisation.



Garden activity has increased steadily over the 14 years the Garden has existed, as more and more of the site has been brought in to regular use. In the early years individual plots were the largest component of garden activity.

These have remained about the same total area of the site, but communal areas have grown and become a bigger component. Older communal areas like the rotational vegie plots and the old hothouse were added to between 2016 and 2018 with the herb area, the native and bush food gardens, and the bigger hothouse. Then the year after we started the market came the market garden, the continuing development of the quarry and the native revegetation work on the north and west boundaries. The majority of the site is now in use.

The areas of the Garden to the east of the quarry, loosely described as the public areas, would undoubtedly have got to where they are today without mechanisation. However constant use of the areas to the west of the quarry only became possible with the advent of the ride on



mower. This piece of mechanisation has allowed the whole site to be utilised.

With Garden growth has come increasing manual handling of materials including soil, manures, composts, gravels, mulches and random assorted heavy things like rocks, cut up trees and much more. Things that could be lifted under OH&S guidelines 10 years ago cannot be manually lifted now. Regular volunteers are barely keeping up with this manual handling now, and it will become more impossible as time goes on. These processes need mechanical support, and the consensus seems to be that the best mechanical support

would be a sub compact tractor or a very small skid-steer (bobcat type of machinery).

Second hand examples of these types of equipment in good condition are harder to come across in smaller models than in larger versions. Small models are used by hobby farmers and the like and rarely gets upgraded. Pieces that come on to the market are usually quite degraded. Whatever we buy must be in good enough condition to not require continual repair. Prices we are working on are for new equipment.

The challenge is out there.