

HORTICULTURE OPPORTUNITIES AT HOFC

Land

The primary area available for an organic horticulture enterprise is approximately 0.5 hectares (ha) which was used by the previous market gardener in the co-op. This land has been worked using organic practices up until quite recently as they ceased production in December 2023.

The land was originally an orchard but was turned over to market garden production in 2020. At that time it was deep-ripped along the contour, and since then it has benefited from adding compost and other organic inputs (farm has been certified organic with NASAA since 2008). Soil tests conducted in April 2023 are available.

There is potentially more land available for horticulture:

- 1.4 ha that was previously a cherry orchard on a north-facing slope near the large irrigation dam. This was previously set up as an orchard block but has been fallow for the last 4 years. Irrigation pipes and drippers are still in place to suit orchard plantings, although need some maintenance and refurbishment.
- A patch of approximately 0.7ha within the existing Mixed Block of orchard trees. This patch most recently had peach and nectarine trees which died as a result of excessive waterlogging due to La Nina conditions. It needs appropriate crops, additional organic matter, and potentially improved drainage.
- Other blocks that currently have orchard trees may become available for replanting with different crops depending on the future of the existing orchard business.





Irrigation

Irrigation water is available at the top of each block, but the current water infrastructure is shared with the orchard. Due to differing water requirements, this has led to some issues in the past.

To give a new enterprise independence from the orchard in terms of water delivery and pumping, it will be necessary to install an independent tank and electric pump and associated pipes, at an estimated cost of \$10,000.

This expense will be borne by the enterprise, but there is potential to negotiate with the landowners over finance. There are no irrigation lines within the primary area itself, so installation of required piping will be the responsibility of the lessee.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure available (apart from common infrastructure) includes:

- Majority use of a 40-foot shipping container with power, previously used for storage and packing by the market garden lessee.
- Access to the farm coolroom (shared with orchard) for short-term produce storage.
- Rainwater for produce washing.
- A permanent 6m x 6m poly hot house.
- Shared use of market equipment (gazebo, weights, tables, scales, etc.)

Equipment & Tools

Any equipment and tools (mechanised or manual) required for the enterprise will be supplied by the lessee.

