

**MEETING DATE:** April 7, 2015

**AGENDA ITEM:** (1) Informational Item Regarding Urban Gardening, Apartment Gardening, and Neighborhood Coop Gardening; and, (2) Discussion Regarding the Potential Role that the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Commission May Wish to Take in Mentoring Community Members Interested in Community Gardening.

**ATTACHMENTS**

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# Apartment Balcony Garden

Send

"Quick tips for a Successful Patio or Apartment Garden!"  
**#organicgardening**  
**#tipsfororganicgardeninginsmall places** **#verticalgardening**  
Limited space doesn't necessarily mean limited ideas. You don't need a huge backyard to create a stunning landscape. You can turn your balcony into unique, intimate and manageable garden in no time. READ MORE @ [www.organic4green...](http://www.organic4green...)

Marla Gates @ [www.organic4gr...](http://www.organic4gr...)  
All Things Green



from Listotic

## 20 Insanely Clever Gardening Tips and Ideas (with pictures!)

20 Insanely Clever Gardening Tips And Ideas - 5. Rubbermaid Container Garden - Just because you don't have much of a yard doesn't mean you can't have a nice little garden going. Rubbermaid storage containers are lightweight and just the right size to get you started. Fill the bottom with packing peanuts and a layer of garden fabric to keep them easy to move. This could even work on a small apartment balcony

**Brittany Henderson**  
Yard ideas



from Country Living

## 7 DIY Backyard Fountains

If you don't have a big backyard, this tiny water garden is the perfect option. Filled with potting soil, pea gravel, and water plants, it fits nicely on a porch or balcony. Get the tutorial at Apartment Therapy.

**Susan Sinkler**  
Garden information



from HubPages

## Growing a Deck, Balcony or Patio Vegetable Garden: 5 Great Ideas

Don't have a green space? You can grow a patio, balcony or apartment vegetable garden with very little square footage. This article presents some easy ways to exercise your urban green thumb!

**Kathy Ivanovskis**  
Garden



from Stylish Eve

## Amazingly Pretty Decorating Ideas for Tiny Balcony Spaces

Amazingly Pretty Decorating Ideas for Tiny Balcony Spaces. **Rent-Direct.com** - NYC Apartments with No Broker Fee.

167 15

**NoFeeRentDirect.com**  
City Plants & Gardens



REVEAL // Viceroy Inspired Balcony Outdoor lanterns, outdoor love seats, black and white stripe pattern outdoor throw pillows, outdoor ottoman, banana palm leaf print outdoor fabric, vintage brass pitcher, vintage cocktail glasses, HGTV Star, DIY, aloe plants, astro turf, high-rise pre-war, apartment building patio balcony terrace, outdoor entertaining

275 30

**Jessie D. Miller**  
The Design Daredevil Blog



from HGTV

## Urban Oasis 2012: Artistic View

HGTV Urban Oasis 2012: Artistic View : Urban Oasis : Home & Garden Television

148 38 1

**Tina Whetsell-Mounger**  
My Style







from Apartment Therapy

### Jenny & Collin's "Work With What You Got" Balcony

texas balcony plants: "Provence" lavender, ornamental cabbage, barrel cactus, aloe vera, jalapeño plant, parsley, cypress, lemon basil and sweet basil, echeveria succulents, Rieger begonias, dwarf improved meyer lemon, strawberry plant, chocolate mint, orange mint, Italian oregano, thyme, creeping rosemary, onion chives, vincas.

968 131

Austin R  
apartment lyfe



from Lushome

### Beautiful Balcony Decorating Ideas, 15 Green Balcony Designs

Traditional window boxes are a charming way to space for your your apartment garden.

3554 511 5

Crowne Park  
Patio Gardens



Idea para hacer una pared verde en el balcón. Mini jardín dentro del departamento

946 127

Angela Hernandez  
For the Home



From tiny-ass apartment ...SMRT for apartment balconies....with a retro vibe

55 14 1

MeganFreshHouse  
Take it Outside



small porch decorating ideas... vertical gardening, small table, chair... love this idea for an apartment patio

282 30

Emily  
Dream Home



from Apartment Therapy



from Modern Interior Design & Furni...

### Small Balcony Design Ideas, Photos and Inspiration

Tips for Decorating a Small Balcony

127 10

Tamara Rabi  
Balcony inspiration



from Apartment Therapy

### No Yard? No Problem: The Best Balcony, Rooftop and Patio Gardens — Apartment...

No Yard? No Problem: The Best Balcony, Rooftop and Patio Gardens: wood pavers & ballast perimeter

178 16

Kate Groob  
Balcony



9 Best Small Apartment Patio Ideas on A Budget | Deepnot

53 8

donna stefanick  
DECOR MAINLY APTS



from Apartment Therapy

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No Yard? No Problem: The Best Balcony, Rooftop and Patio Gardens Apartment Therapy's Home Remedies | Apartment Therapy

896 140

Raya Young  
For the Home: Apartment



from Apartment Therapy

### 12 Dreamy Dream Bathrooms

A vertical garden is easy to make. Some nice plants in a pot will do in small gardens or balconies and still give privacy while bathing!

13

Sophia Reuser  
#IKEAcatalogus - My Home, My ...





3/26/2015

from The Kitchn

Tips for a Small-Space Kitchen Herb Garden

51

BE\*E

grow\* damnit

How To Grow Tomatoes With The Alaska Grow Bucket System

Excellent Growing System Anyone Can Grow

How To Grow Tomatoes With The Alaska Grow Bucket System

6410

Plant Care Today

Gardening

Gardening Without a Garden: 10 Ideas for Your Patio or Balcony — Renters Solutions | Apartment Therapy

2

Sharon G. Pardue

gardening

Corsica Elho Round Resin Bridge Flower Planter - Set of 2 | www

@Alison Danielle Here's what you need! Round Resin Elho Corsica Flower Bridge Planters for Metal Balcony Railings

2471

Margerita Romanello

Outside of the box

Everything in Ashley's pins squeal - Pick me up! "...apartment balcony garden - I wish!!!" - www.pinterest.com...

411

A Shalbert

In need of a pick-me-up!

Rustoleums glow-in-the dark paint for flower pots. This will look nice for my apartment balcony plants

61

Rachel Hinson

For the Home

ATTACHMENT A

from Mom with a PREP

Vertical Gardening for Big or Small Spaces

Mom with a PREP | Vertical Gardening gives big and small spaces a chance to grow more crops in a smaller area.

432

Jane @ Mom with a PREP

On the Homestead

Urban Gardener: A Greenhouse for Your Balcony by

Compact lean-to greenhouse, perfect for an urban balcony

73

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Page 3

https://www.pinterest.com/explore/apartment-balcony-garden/

3/3



# 10 Secrets for Growing an Urban Balcony Garden by Michelle Slatalla (/about/michelle-slatalla)

OLDER (/posts/5-favorites-summery-green-roofs-in-the-city)

NEWER (/posts/a-stylish-way-to-water-plants-while-youre-away)

[www.facebook.com/sharer.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.gardenista.com%2Fposts%2F66-square-feet-a-delicious-life](http://www.facebook.com/sharer.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.gardenista.com%2Fposts%2F66-square-feet-a-delicious-life) (http://www.gardenista.com%2Fposts%2F66-square-feet-a-delicious-life) · August 8, 2013

dium=facebook&utm\_source=site&utm\_campaign=facebook\_share\_button)

[Share](http://www.facebook.com/sharer.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.gardenista.com%2Fposts%2F66-square-feet-a-delicious-life) (http://www.facebook.com/sharer.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.gardenista.com%2Fposts%2F66-square-feet-a-delicious-life) [Tweet](http://www.facebook.com/sharer.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.gardenista.com%2Fposts%2F66-square-feet-a-delicious-life) (http://www.facebook.com/sharer.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.gardenista.com%2Fposts%2F66-square-feet-a-delicious-life)

Raised in South Africa by a mother who is a ferociously good gardener, Marie Viljoen had one non-negotiable requirement when she went apartment hunting in Brooklyn. "I took this tiny, tiny apartment only because it had a terrace on the top floor of a brownstone, where it was open to the sky," she says. "I knew I could have a garden."

A small terrace, to be sure—the size of a bathroom, say, or a walk-in closet. But Viljoen, taking advantage of the good light, a wide ledge for pots, and enough floor space for a table and two chairs, has transformed it into a lush garden where she dines outdoors and grows much of her food.

Viljoen's garden, inspiration for the [66 Square Feet](http://66squarefeet.blogspot.com/) (<http://66squarefeet.blogspot.com/>) blog where she chronicles her gardening and cooking adventures in New York City, also has spawned a book; next month, she will publish the cookbook *66 Square Feet: A Delicious Life* (<http://www.gardenista.com/products/66-square-feet-a-delicious-life>) (you can pre-order it for \$19.95 from Amazon).

Here are her top tips for creating an edible urban garden:

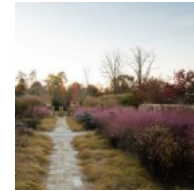
Photographs by [Marie Viljoen](http://66squarefeet.blogspot.com/) (<http://66squarefeet.blogspot.com/>).



## Marie Viljoen's Top 10 Tips for Growing an Urban Balcony Garden:

1. Use a high-quality organic potting soil and augment it with compost.

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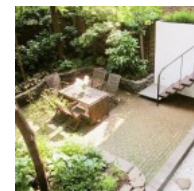
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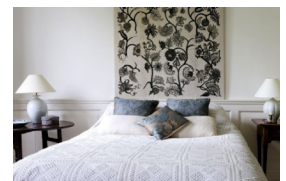
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This Farm In A Box Can Grow As Much As An Acre Of

2. Layer plants that bloom at different times on top of one another in containers—and fertilize once a month.
3. If your terrace is sturdy enough to support the weight, cover the floor with filter fabric and a shallow layer of gravel so plants can self-sow and naturalize.
4. Study how sunlight moves across the space over the course of a day and cluster your containers—sun lovers vs. woodland plants—in areas where they will thrive.
5. Clustering pots makes it easier to water plants efficiently. Most containers will dry out and need water every day; during a heat wave, water twice a day.
6. Make your peace with pests. If squirrels dig up a pot in the course of burying an acorn, be happy you've created a wildlife habitat in the city.
7. Plant a pollinators' favorites to attract bees and butterflies. "It's lovely to see them up here," says Viljoen.
8. Herbs are the easiest edibles to grow in containers.
9. Some fruits also are surprisingly easy to grow in containers too: blueberries, for instance, and currants. "A lot of people are surprised by the success of my fig tree," says Viljoen.
10. Vines and fast-growing climbers are good for a small space because they will lend vertical interest quickly.



Above: To attract pollinators, Viljoen grows agastache, hyssop, Japanese anemome, and Bulbine frutescens, a native of South Africa that has orange flowers.



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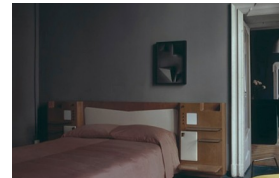
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## ATTACHMENT B

(<http://www.fastcoexist.com/304337-box-can-grow-as-much-lettuce-as-a-farm-in-a-box-can-grow-as-much-lettuce-of-land>)

### Top 15 Interiors Trends of 2015

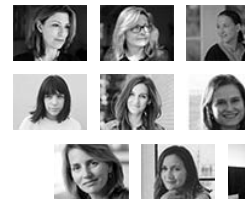


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(<http://www.gardenista.com/editors>)



(<http://www.remodelista.com/book-information>)

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Above: "Everything I grow is in a pot, with the exception of the naturalized herbs and violets that are coming up in the gravel I put down to cover the ugly, pressure-treated deck floor," says Viljoen.



Viljoen covered the floor with filter fabric and a 1.5-inch deep layer of gravel. "Choose plants with shallow root systems and make sure they have access to water," she says.

A 150-square-foot roll of [Greenscapes Premium Landscape Fabric](http://www.gardenista.com/products/greenscapes-premium-landscape-fabric) (<http://www.gardenista.com/products/greenscapes-premium-landscape-fabric>) is \$13.78 from Lowe's.



10 Garden Ideas to Steal from Ireland

(/posts/10-garden-ideas-to-steal-from-ireland)



Garden Visit: At Home with June Blake in Ireland's County Wicklow

(/posts/garden-visit-at-home-with-june-blake-in-irelands-county-wicklow)



Architects' Roundup: 10 Emerald Green Gardens

(/posts/architects-roundup-10-emerald-green-gardens-from-the-architect-designer-directory)



A Modern Garden: At Home with Charles and Ray Eames in California

(/posts/a-modern-garden-visit-at-home-with-charles-and-ray-eames-in-california)



Leaves of Grass: 9 Ways to Create Curb Appeal with Perennial Grasses

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ATTACHMENT B  
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Above: Violets thrive—and have naturalized—on the balcony floor. Also growing in the gravel are mint and creeping jenny, on which Viljoen's cat loves to sleep.

Viljoen feeds all her plants—including those growing in the gravel—monthly with a "fishy emulsion" of Neptune Fish/Seaweed Blend (<http://www.gardenista.com/products/neptunes-harvest-organic-fish-seaweed-blend-fertilizer>) organic fertilizer; a 5-gallon pail is \$143 from Nature's Harvest.



Above: "Everyone asks about varmints, but I've never seen a pigeon in the garden. I grow strawberries and figs, but they've never been attacked by birds," says Viljoen.



ATTACHMENT B

New Glamor for Old  
Hollywood: A Visit to  
Howard Hughes' Garden

(/posts/new-glamor-for-  
old-hollywood-a-visit-to-  
howard-hughes-garden)





Above: "Some fruits are easier to grow in pots than in the ground," says Viljoen. "With blueberries, it's easier to adjust the pH level in a contained environment. My pH modifier is fresh coffee."

Viljoen layers plantings in pots so something is always blooming throughout the growing season. The deepest layer is summer bulbs. At mid-level are perennials. In the top: annuals.

One of Viljoen's favorite late-season bloomers is [Plectranthus 'Mona Lavender.'](http://www.gardenista.com/products/mona-lavender-plectranthus) (<http://www.gardenista.com/products/mona-lavender-plectranthus>) (\$5.98 apiece from Lowe's), a South African native with purple flowers.

"It's lovely to have something blooming in October," she says.

For more ideas for creating a small-space urban garden, see [Required Reading: The Edible Balcony](http://www.gardenista.com/posts/required-reading-the-edible-balcony) (<http://www.gardenista.com/posts/required-reading-the-edible-balcony>).



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**EXPLORE MORE:** Issue 84: Summer Gardens in the City (</issue/7/84/summer-gardens-in-the-city>), Outdoor Gardens (</outdoor-gardens>) Ask the Expert (</list/ask-the-expert>), Urban Gardens (</list/urban-gardens>), Brooklyn (</list/brooklyn>), New York City (</list/new-york-city>), Decks & Patios (</list/decks-patios>), Outdoor & Gardens (</list/outdoor-gardens>), Perennials (</list/perennials>)

5 Favorites: Summery Green Roofs in the City  
By Michelle Slatalla

A Stylish Way to Water Plants While You're Away  
By Michelle Slatalla

Home / Home &amp; Garden / Green Living

# 66 Things You Can Grow At Home: In Containers, Without a Garden

by Rachel Cemansky



Want more gardening info? Check out our [Organic Gardening feature](#) for more.  
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Growing your own food is exciting, not only because you get to see things grow from nothing into ready-to-eat fruits and veggies, but you also don't have to worry about the [pesticides they might contain](#), and you definitely cut down on the [miles they—and you—have to travel](#).

As it turns out, with pretty minimal effort, [anyone can be a gardener](#). My boyfriend and I are essentially first-timers this season and so far have the beginnings of strawberries peeking out, tomatoes are on their way, the basil's about ready for a big batch of pesto, and once the last frost hits, the peppers, kale, spinach, chard, and mesclun will be on their way, too. All on a tiiiiny little terrace (with the help of a little [DIY carpentry](#)).

## WATCH VIDEO: [World's Greenest Homes: Rooftop Garden](#)

If you're up to the challenge—and it really isn't much of one—growing your own food can be so rewarding. And so much cheaper! Just be sure to choose the [right planter](#) or [container](#), learn how to [maintain it properly](#), and go find yourself some seeds! (Or starter plants.) Like this idea? Be sure to check out these [6 Crazy Concepts for Micro Gardens That Actually Work](#) to get inspiration for designing your own garden in a small space. While you're at it, check in with our [Organic Gardening feature](#) for tons more info on making your garden grow.

Here's a starter list of all the crazy things even urban gardeners, without space for a garden, can grow at home.

### Tree fruits - including apples

1. [Apples](#) can be grown [in a container](#); you can also grow them on the balcony or other small space using a technique called [espaliering](#).
2. [Kumquats](#)
3. [Avocados](#) (plenty of [extra tips](#) online if you search)
4. [Blackberries](#)

5. [Blueberries](#) (sometimes [helpful videos](#) are available online)

6. [Pomegranate](#)

7. [Cherries](#)

8. [Figs](#)

9. [Pears](#)

### Citrus fruits

Citrus trees in particular are said to be good for beginning gardeners and are [easy to grow indoors](#), so don't let inexperience or lack of outdoor space stop you from enjoying fresh-picked, hyper-local fruit.

10. [Dwarf oranges](#)

11. [Grapefruit](#)

12. [Tangerines](#)

13. [Meyer lemons](#)

14. [Limes](#)

### Tropical fruits

Tropical fruits can also be [surprisingly easy to grow indoors](#), even in non-tropical climates. Such as...

15. [Bananas](#) (look for [container gardening tips](#) online)

16. [Pineapple](#)

17. [Papaya](#)



18. [Guavas](#) ([several varieties](#))

**The real surprises**

19. [Hops](#)—yes, as in the "[spice](#)" [ingredient in beer](#). Turns out they're [easy to grow](#)!

20. [Aloe Vera](#)

21. [Strawberries](#)

22. Tea (well, [herbal tea](#))

23. [Quinoa](#)!

**The non-surprises**

24. [Tomatoes](#)

25. [Summer squash](#)

26. [Other squashes](#), like acorn and pumpkin

27. [Hot Peppers](#)

28. [Sweet peppers](#)

29. [Cucumbers](#)

**Melons**

30. [Small cantaloupe](#)

31. [Jenny Lind melon](#) (an heirloom cantaloupe)

32. [Golden Midget Watermelon](#)

**Herbs**

Just about any [herb grows well indoors](#)—just be sure that if you're going to do any container-sharing, you do your research first about which herbs co-habitate well together. (Some will hog water, for example, and leave the others dried out.)

33. [Basil](#)

34. [Oregano](#)

35. [Parsley](#)

36. [Rosemary](#)

37. [Chives](#)

38. [Catnip](#)

39. [Thyme](#)

40. [Sage](#)

41. [Parsley](#)

**Leafy Greens**

42. [Kale](#)

43. [Mesclun greens](#)

44. [Spinach](#)

45. [Swiss chard](#)

46. Lettuces (plenty of options there, from [micro-greens](#) to [head or loose-leaf](#))

47. [Mustard greens](#)

48. [Collard greens](#)

49. [Arugula](#)

**Root Vegetables**

50. [Carrots](#)

51. [Beets](#)

52. [Potatoes](#)

#### Other healthy-sounding stuff

53. [Sprouts](#)

54. More sprouts: [mung bean and lentil sprouts](#)

55. [Wheatgrass](#)

56. [Kohlrabi](#)

57. [Turnips](#)

58. [Rutabagas](#)

59. [Celeriac](#)

60. [Parsnips](#)

61. [Jerusalem Artichoke](#)

62. [Sugar snap peas](#)

63. [Rhubarb](#) (not ideal in a container, but it can work)

64. [Mushrooms](#) (again, more [tips online](#) if you look)

65. [Pole Beans](#)

66. Aaaand... [asparagus](#), although some disagree that it does well in a container. Try it if you're ok with a risk!

Bonus 67: You can [grow your own loofah](#), too, but you'd need a garden rather than a container for that.

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## Dan Allen

CEO

Dan, an Iowa native, is proud to practice a much different sort of agriculture than his home state is known for. As Farmscape's CEO, he oversees a multiple bottom-line approach that seeks to maximize the venture's social and environmental impact as well as its financial well-being. Dan is a Master Gardener and a member of the LA Food Policy Council's Working Group on Urban Agriculture. He is also a periodic contributor to The Huffington Post and Seedstock.

**Favorite Veggie:** Sun Gold Tomatoes



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## COMMUNITY GARDEN START-UP GUIDE

By  
**Rachel Surls, UCCE County Director**  
With Help of **Chris Braswell and Laura Harris, Los Angeles Conservation Corps**  
Updated March 2001 by  
**Yvonne Savio, Common Ground Garden Program Manager, UCCE**

This "Community Garden Start-Up Guide" is intended to help neighborhood groups and organizations along the path to starting and sustaining a community garden.

### ***Why Start a Community Garden?***

Many families living in the city would like to grow some of their own fruits, vegetables, herbs, and flowers. Some want to save money on their food bills. Others like the freshness, flavor and wholesomeness of home-grown produce. And for many, gardening is a relaxing way to exercise and enjoy being out-of-doors. There are also families from other cultures who would like to grow traditional foods not available in the supermarket.

Community gardens beautify neighborhoods and help bring neighbors closer together. They have been proven as tools to reduce neighborhood crime--particularly when vacant, blighted lots are targeted for garden development. Community gardens provide safe, recreational green space in urban areas with little or no park land, and can contribute greatly to keeping urban air clean.

Those who are lucky enough to have sunny backyards or balconies can plant a garden whenever they have the time and energy. But what about those who do not have a place to garden? For these people, community gardens may be the answer.

### ***Step by Step To Your Own Community Garden***

#### **1. Get Your Neighbors Involved**

There is a lot of work involved in starting a new garden. Make sure you have several people who will help you. Over the years, our experience indicates that there should be at least ten interested families to create and sustain a garden project. Survey the residents of your neighborhood to see if they are interested and would participate. Hold monthly meetings of the interested group to develop and initiate plans, keep people posted on the garden's progress, and keep them involved in the process from day one.

#### **2. Form a Garden Club**

A garden club is a way of formally organizing your new group. It helps you make decisions and divide-up the work effectively. It also ensures that every one has a vested interest in the garden and can contribute to its design, development, and maintenance. It can be formed at any time during the process of starting a community garden; however, it's wise to do so early on. This way, club members can share in the many tasks of establishing the new garden. The typical garden club will have many functions, including:

- Establishing garden rules (see sample)
- Accepting and reviewing garden applications
- Making plot assignments
- Collecting garden dues (if any)
- Paying water bills
- Resolving conflicts

The typical garden club has at least two officers: a president and a treasurer; although your garden club may have more if necessary. Elections for garden officers usually are held annually.

## Find Land for the Garden

Look around your neighborhood for a vacant lot that gets plenty of sun—at least six to eight hours each day. A garden site should be relatively flat (although slight slopes can be terraced). It should be relatively free of large pieces of concrete left behind from demolition of structures. Any rubble or debris should be manageable—that is, it can be removed by volunteers clearing the lot with trash bags, wheelbarrows, and pick up trucks. Ideally, it should have a fence around it with a gate wide enough for a vehicle to enter. It is possible to work with a site that is paved with concrete or asphalt by building raised beds that sit on the surface or using containers. You can also remove the asphalt or concrete to create areas for gardens, but such a garden will be much more difficult, expensive, and time-consuming to start. A site without paving, and soil relatively free of trash and debris is best.

The potential garden site should be within walking, or no more than a short drive from you and the neighbors who have expressed interest in participating. If the lot is not already being used, make sure the community supports establishing a garden there.

It's best to select three potential sites in your neighborhood and write down their address and nearest cross streets. If you don't know the address of a vacant lot, get the addresses of the properties on both sides of the lot—this will give you the ability to make an educated guess on the address of the site. We suggest you identify at least three potential sites because one or more might not be available for you to use for various reasons, and you want to end up with at least one that works out.

### 3. Find out Who Owns the Land

It is illegal to use land without obtaining the owners permission. In order to obtain permission, you must first find out who owns the land.

Take the information you have written down about the location of the sites in step 3 to your county's tax assessor's office. The Los Angeles County Tax Assessor's office is located at 225 North Hill Street, Room 205. Or go to a branch office listed in the white pages of the telephone directory. At this office, you will look through the map books to get the names and addresses of the owner of the sites you are interested in.

### 4. Find out if Your Proposed Site has Water

While you are researching site ownership, contact the water service provider in your area to find out if your potential site(s) has/have an existing water meter to hook-in to. Call your water provider's customer service department, and ask them to conduct a "site investigation". They will need the same location information that you took with you to the Tax Assessor's office.

Existing access to water will make a critical difference in the expense of getting your project started. Depending on the size of your garden site, you will need a 1/2-inch to 1-inch water meter. If there has been water service to the site in the past, it is relatively inexpensive to get a new water meter installed (if one doesn't already exist). If there has never been water service to that site, it might cost much more for your water provider to install a lateral line from the street main to the site and install your new meter.

### 5 Contact the Land Owner

Once you have determined that your potential site is feasible, write a letter to the landowner asking for permission to use the property for a community garden. Be sure to mention to the landowner the value of the garden to the community and the fact the gardeners will be responsible for keeping the site clean and weed-free (this saves landowners from maintaining the site or paying city weed abatement fees).

Establish a term for use of the site, and prepare and negotiate a lease. Typically, groups lease garden sites from land owners for \$1 per year. You should attempt to negotiate a lease for a least three years (or longer if the property owner is agreeable). Many landowners are worried about their liability for injuries that might occur at the garden. Therefore, you should include a simple "hold harmless" waiver in the lease and in gardener agreement forms. For more information on the lease, and the hold harmless waiver, see 8, "Signing a Lease".

Be prepared to purchase liability insurance to protect further the property owner (and yourself) should an accident occur at the garden. For more information on the hold harmless waiver, and liability insurance, see 8, "Signing a Lease", and 9, "Obtaining Liability Insurance".

### 6. Get Your Soil Tested

It might be advisable to have the soil at the site tested for fertility pH and presence of heavy metals. Contact a private lab.

### 7. Signing a Lease

Landowners of potential garden sites might be concerned about their liability should someone be injured while working in the garden. Your group should be prepared to offer the landowner a lease with a "hold harmless" waiver. This "hold harmless" waiver can simply state that should one of the gardeners be injured as a result of negligence on the part of another gardener, the landowner is "held harmless" and will not be sued. Each gardener should be made aware of this waiver and should be required to sign an

agreement in order to obtain a plot in the community garden. A sample gardener agreement form is attached which your group can use as a model.

## **8. Obtaining Liability Insurance**

Landowners may also require that your group purchase liability insurance. Community gardeners in the Los Angeles area can obtain inexpensive policies from Metro Farm Gardens. Contact Toby Leaman at (323) 663-7441 or fax (323) 663-5715, for more information on obtaining an insurance policy.

Once you have a lease signed by the landowner and liability insurance, you're free to plan and plant your garden!

## **9. Planning the Garden**

Community members should be involved in the planning, design, and set-up of the garden. Before the design process begins, you should measure your site and make a simple, to-scale site map. Hold two or three garden design meetings at times when interested participants can attend. Make sure that group decisions are recorded in official minutes, or that someone takes accurate notes. This ensures that decisions made can be communicated to others, and progress will not be slowed. A great way to generate ideas and visualize the design is to use simple drawings or photos cut from garden magazines representing the different garden components--flower beds, compost bins, pathways, arbors, etc.--that can be moved around on the map as the group discusses layout.

### **a. Basic Elements of a Community Garden**

Although there are exceptions to every rule, community gardens should almost always include:

- At least 15 plots assigned to community members. These should be placed in the sunniest part of the garden. Without plots for individual participation, it is very difficult to achieve long-term community involvement. Raised bed plots, which are more expensive, should be no more than 4 feet wide (to facilitate access to plants from the sides without stepping into the bed), and between 8 and 12 feet long (it is advisable to construct your raised beds in sizes that are found in readily-available lumber, or that can be cut without too much waste). In-ground plots can be from 10 x 10 up to 20 x 20 feet. Pathways between beds and plots should be least 3 to 4 feet wide to allow space for wheelbarrows. The soil in both raised bed and in-ground plots should be amended with aged compost or manure to improve its fertility and increase its organic matter content.
- A simple irrigation system with one hose bib or faucet for every four plots. Hand watering with a hose is the most practical and affordable for individual plots (and it's almost a necessity when you start plants from seed). Drip and soaker-hose irrigation can be used in all areas of the garden for transplanted and established plants, but especially for deep-rooted fruit trees and ornamentals. If no one in your group is knowledgeable about irrigation, you might need some assistance in designing your irrigation system. Seek out a landscape contractor or nursery or garden center professional to help you develop a basic layout and materials list.
- An 8-foot fence around the perimeter with a drive-through gate. In our experience, this is a key element of success. Don't count on eliminating all acts of vandalism or theft, but fencing will help to keep these to tolerably low levels.
- A tool shed or other structure for storing tools, supplies, and materials. Recycled metal shipping containers make excellent storage sheds, and are almost vandal-proof. Contact the Port Authority for leads on where to find them.
- A bench or picnic table where gardeners can sit, relax, and take a break--preferably in shade. If there are no shade trees on the site, a simple arbor can be constructed from wood or pipe, and planted with chayote squash, bougainvillea, grapes, kiwis, or some other vine.
- A sign with the garden's name, sponsors, and a contact person's phone number for more information. If your community is bilingual, include information in this language.
- A shared composting area for the community gardeners. Wood pallets are easy to come-by and (when stood on-end, attached in a U-shape, and the inside covered with galvanized rabbit-wire) make excellent compost bins.

### **b. Nice Additions to Your Garden Plan**

- A small fruit tree orchard, whose care and harvest can be shared by all the members. The orchard can also create shade for people as well as shade-loving plants.
- A water fountain. This can be a simple drinking fountain attachment to a hose bib (or faucet) you can purchase at a hardware store.
- Perimeter landscaping, which can focus on drought tolerant flowers and shrubs, plants which attract butterflies and hummingbirds, or roses and other flowers suitable for cutting bouquets. Herbs are also well-suited to perimeter landscaping and help to create barriers to unwanted pest insects who do not like the smell of their essential oils.
- A children's area, which can include special small plots for children, a sand box, and play equipment.
- A meeting area, which could range from a semi-circle of hay bales or tree stumps, to a simple amphitheater built of recycled, broken concrete. Building a shade structure above would be beneficial as well.



- A community bulletin board where rules, meeting notices, and other important information can be posted.

## **10. Creating a Garden Budget**

Use your design to develop a materials list and cost-out the project. You will need to call-around to get prices on fencing and other items. You might be surprised at the cost. A community garden with just the Basic Elements (listed above) typically costs between \$2,500 to \$5,000. At this point, your group might decide to scale back your initial plans and save some design ideas for a "Phase Two" of the garden.

## **11. Where to Get Materials and Money**

While some start-up funds will be needed through determination and hard work, you can obtain donations of materials for your project. Community businesses might assist, and provide anything from fencing to lumber to plants. The important thing is to ask. Develop a letter that tells merchants about your project and why it's important to the community. Attach your "wish list", but be reasonable. Try to personalize this letter for each business you approach. Drop it off personally with the store manager, preferably with a couple of cute kids who will be gardening in tow! Then, follow-up by phone. Be patient, persistent, and polite. Your efforts will pay-off with at least some of the businesses you approach. Be sure to thank these key supporters and recognize them on your garden sign, at a garden grand opening, or other special event.

Money, which will be needed to purchase items not donated, can be obtained through community fund-raisers such as car washes, craft and rummage sales, pancake breakfasts, and bake sales. They can also be obtained by writing grants, but be aware grant writing efforts can take six months or longer to yield results, and you must have a fiscal sponsor or agent with tax-exempt 501(c)3 status (such as a church or non-profit corporation) that agrees to administer the funds.

## **12. Make Sure Your Garden Infrastructure is in Place**

If you have not yet formed a garden club, now is the time to do so. It's also time to establish garden rules, develop a garden application form for those who wish to participate, set up a bank account, and determine what garden dues will be if these things have not already been done. This is also the time to begin having monthly meetings if you have not already done so. Also, if you haven't already contacted your city councilperson, he or she can be helpful in many ways including helping your group obtain city services such as trash pick-up. Their staff can also help you with community organizing and soliciting for material donations.

## **13. Get Growing!**

Many new garden groups make the mistake of remaining in the planning, design and fundraising stage for an extended period of time. There is a fine line between planning well and over planning. After several months of the initial research, designing, planning, and outreach efforts, group members will very likely be feeling frustrated and will begin to wonder if all their efforts will ever result in a garden. That's why it's important to plant something on your site as soon as possible. People need to see visible results or they will begin to lose interest in the project. To keep the momentum going, initiate the following steps even if you are still seeking donations and funds for your project (but not until you have signed a lease and obtained insurance).

### **a. Clean up the Site**

Schedule community workdays to clean up the site. How many work days you need will depend on the size of the site, and how much and what kind of debris are on site.

### **b. Install the Irrigation System**

Without water, you can't grow anything. So get this key element into place as soon as possible. There are plenty of opportunities for community involvement--from digging trenches to laying out PVC pipes.

### **c. Plant Something**

Once you have water, there are many options for in-garden action. Stake out beds and pathways by marking them with stakes and twine. Mulch pathways. If your fence isn't in yet, some people might still want to accept the risk of vandalism and get their plots started. You can also plant shade and fruit trees and begin to landscape the site. If you do not yet have a source of donated plants, or don't wish to risk having them vandalized, plant annual flower seeds which will grow quickly and can be replaced later. Seeds for Los Angeles County community and school gardens can be obtained through the Common Ground Garden Program (323) 260-3348.

### **d. Continue to construct the garden as materials and funds become available.**

## **14. Celebrate!**

At this point, your ideas and hard work have finally become a community garden! Be sure to take time to celebrate. Have a grand opening, barbecue, or some other fun event to give everyone who helped to make this happen, a special thank-you. This is the time to give all those who gave donated materials or time a special certificate, bouquet, or other form of recognition.

## **15. Troubleshooting as the Garden Develops**

All community gardens will experience problems somewhere along the way. Don't get discouraged--get organized. The key to success for community gardens is not only preventing problems from ever occurring, but also working together to solve them when they do inevitably occur. In our experience, these are some of the most common problems that "crop-up" in community gardens, and our suggestions for solving them

**a. Vandalism**

Most gardens experience occasional vandalism. The best action you can take is to replant immediately. Generally the vandals become bored after a while and stop. Good community outreach, especially to youth and the garden's immediate neighbors is also important. Most important--don't get discouraged. It happens. Get over it and keep going. What about barbed wired or razor wire to make the garden more secure? Our advice--don't. It's bad for community relations, looks awful, and is sometimes illegal to install without a permit. If you need more physical deterrents to keep vandals out, plant bougainvillea or pyracantha along your fence, their thorns will do the trick!

**b. Security**

Invite the community officer from your local precinct to a garden meeting to get their suggestions on making the garden more secure. Community officers can also be a great help in solving problems with garden vandalism, and dealing with drug dealers, and gang members in the area.

**c. Communication**

Clear and well-enforced garden rules and a strong garden president can go a long way towards minimizing misunderstandings in the garden. But communication problems do arise. It's the job of the garden club to resolve those issues. If it's something not clearly spelled out in the rules, the membership can take a vote to add new rules and make modifications to existing rules.

Language barriers are a very common source of misunderstandings. Garden club leadership should make every effort to have a translator at garden meetings where participants are bilingual--perhaps a family member of one of the garden members who speaks the language will offer to help.

**d. Trash**

It's important to get your compost system going right away and get some training for gardeners on how to use it. If gardeners don't compost, large quantities of waste will begin to build up, create an eyesore, and could hurt your relationships with neighbors and the property owner. Waste can also become a fire hazard. Make sure gardeners know how to sort trash properly, what to compost, and what to recycle. Trash cans placed in accessible areas are helpful to keep a neat and tidy garden.

**e. Gardener Drop-Out**

There has been, and probably always will be, a high rate of turnover in community gardens. Often, people sign up for plots and then don't follow through. Remember, gardening is hard work for some people, especially in the heat of summer. Be sure to have a clause in your gardener agreement which states gardeners forfeit their right to their plot if they don't plant it within one month, or if they don't maintain it. While gardeners should be given every opportunity to follow through, if after several reminders either by letter or phone nothing changes, it is time for the club to reassign the plot. It is also advisable that every year, the leadership conduct a renewed community outreach campaign by contacting churches and other groups in the neighborhood to let them know about the garden and that plots are available.

**f. Weeds**

Gardeners tend to visit their plots less during the winter time, and lower participation, combined with rain, tends to create a huge weed problem in January, February, and March. Remember, part of your agreement with the landowner is that you will maintain the lot and keep weeds from taking over. In the late summer/early fall, provide gardeners with a workshop or printed material about what can be grown in a fall and winter garden. Also, schedule garden workdays for the spring in advance since you know you'll need them at the end of winter to clear weeds. If you anticipate that plots will be untended during the winter, apply a thick layer of mulch or hay to the beds and paths to reduce weed proliferation.

**Good luck with your community garden project!**

Yvonne Savio, Common Ground Garden Program Manager, University of California Cooperative Extension, Los Angeles County  
4800 E. Cesar E. Chavez Avenue, Los Angeles CA 90022, Phone 323-260-3407, Fax 323-881-0067, Email ydsavio@ucdavis.edu  
Website: [http://celosangeles.ucdavis.edu/Common\\_Ground\\_Garden\\_Program/](http://celosangeles.ucdavis.edu/Common_Ground_Garden_Program/)  
Master Gardener Gardening helpline: mglosangeleshelpline@ucdavis.edu, 323-260-3238

2007 Lifetime Achievement Award, Los Angeles Community Garden Council

2007 Certificate of Commendation, Los Angeles Unified School District

2006 Certificate of Appreciation, City of Los Angeles

2004 "Feeding the Hungry" Garden Crusader Award, Gardener's Supply Company

Since 1978, the Common Ground Garden program has helped Los Angeles County residents to garden, grow their own food, and healthfully prepare it. Our targeted audience and priority are to serve limited-resource residents and those traditionally underrepresented. By training community volunteers, we empower neighborhoods to create their own solutions. Our Master Gardener volunteers work primarily with community gardens, school gardens, seniors, and homeless and battered women's shelters.

**Sample Community Garden CONTRACT**  
*(Information in parentheses is to be determined by individual garden)*

**Common Ground Garden Program, University of California Cooperative Extension, Los Angeles County**  
**P.O. Box 22255, 4800 E. Cesar E. Chavez Avenue, Los Angeles CA 90022**  
**Phone (323) 260-3407, Fax (323) 881-0067, Email <ydsavio@ucdavis.edu>**

**Rules, Terms, and Conditions for Participation**

**Introduction**

- A. The (organization/garden manager) is the highest governing authority at the (Name) Community Garden.
- B. Breaking any rules, terms, and conditions is cause for exclusion from the garden and loss of your plot.
  1. You will receive one verbal warning from the garden manager.
  2. If no response or correction has been made, you will receive written notice two weeks later.
  3. In another two weeks, if no response or correction has been made, you will receive written final notification that you have forfeited your gardening privileges and plot.
  4. You will be allowed to reapply for another garden plot only after one year, and only at the discretion of the garden manager.

**Rules, Terms, and Condition for Participation**

If accepted as a gardener, I will abide by the following rules, terms, and conditions.

1. I use this garden at the sole discretion of (Watts Family) Community Garden. I agree to abide by its policies and practices.
2. The fee for the use of the garden is (\$32.00) per plot, per year (January 1 – December 31), due on or before January 1). Fee for half a year after (beginning July 1 or later) is (\$16.00). There are no refunds.
3. Once I have been assigned a plot, I will cultivate and plant it within two weeks. I will garden year round. My plot cannot be left fallow or unused for any period of three weeks or longer, more than one time a year.
4. My plot is (20 x 20) feet. I will not expand my plot beyond this measurement or into paths or other plots. I will keep all my plants within the limits of my garden plot and will not allow any plants to grow more than six feet high. I must keep my plot free of weeds, pests and diseases.
5. I will keep my plot, paths, and surrounding areas clean and neat. I will completely separate my trash into three groups: 1) dead plants, leaves, and other green waste plant parts; 2) rocks, stones, and asphalt; and 3) paper, plastic, cardboard, wood, metal, etc. I will put each type of trash only in the areas designated specifically for each. Anything I bring from my home I will take back home. I will not bring household trash and leave it at the (Watts Family) Community Garden.
6. If I now have more than one plot, I will give up my additional plots by the end of this gardening year (December 31).
7. I will not plant any illegal plant. I will not smoke, drink alcoholic beverages, use illegal drugs, or gamble in the garden. I will not come to the garden while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. I will not bring weapons or pets or other animals to the garden.
8. Guests and visitors, including children, may enter the garden only if I accompany them. They must follow all rules, terms, and conditions stated here. I will supervise my children at all times when they are in the garden. I am solely responsible for the behavior of my guests.
9. The garden manager will assign me general garden maintenance tasks each month, and I must complete them by the end of the month that I am assigned them
10. I will water my plot according to water-wise guidelines. (If I use more than the recommended amount of water, I will pay a fee each month to cover the cost of this additional water.
11. I will attend the regular (bi-monthly) garden club meetings. If workshops are offered, I will attend at least one of each of the following topics: soil preparation and maintenance, watering the vegetable garden, and pest and disease control.
12. I will not apply any pesticides in the garden without the approval of the garden manager.
13. I will not make duplicate keys of any locks at the garden or give my key or lock combination to another person.
14. I will not take food or plants from other gardeners' plots. I will not take anything from the garden that is not rightfully mine.
15. I will respect other gardeners, and I will not use abusive or profane language or discriminate against others.
16. I will work to keep the garden a happy, secure, and enjoyable place where all participants can garden and socialize peacefully in a neighborly manner.
17. I forfeit my right to sue the owner of the property

**Commitment**

*I have read and understand the application and accept these rules, terms, and conditions stated above for the participation in the (Name) Community Garden*

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
 Gardener

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Garden Manager

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Sonoma Health Action

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## Creating a Neighborhood Garden Wheel

[Download this page as a pdf document \(/sites/default/files/u70/iGROW - Creating a Neighborhood Garden Wheel Phase 2 6-22-10.pdf\)](#)

By: Lynn Renn and Trathen Heckman, 2010

### What is a Garden Wheel?



A **"Garden Wheel"** is a group of neighbors and friends that comes together to create and nurture food gardens and community, and to share locally-grown food, labor, information and resources. Typically, members take turns working on garden projects that rotate (like a wheel) from household to household. Eventually all members benefit from hands-on support in their own food garden and the sharing of information, resources and fun.

### Why Create a Garden Wheel in your Neighborhood?

You already know that growing your own food offers many benefits to you, your family, and our environment. Connecting with neighbors through a **Garden Wheel** offers additional benefits, such as:

- Neighborhood work parties and potlucks are a great way to get to know your neighbors and improve neighborhood safety and beauty.
- Creating food gardens throughout the neighborhood improves access to healthy food for you and your neighbors.
- Affordable way to get the help you need on garden projects that might seem too big for your family.
- Helps create a support network to share garden information and resources (such as extra seeds, plants, and fresh garden produce).
- Easy way to share information and skills about all aspects of food growing and preservation.

# How to Create and Sustain a Garden Wheel

All you need to get started is a few people that are interested in working together to organize and make a plan. The following 4 steps will help you get your neighborhood Garden Wheel spinning. Good luck!

## Step 1: Throw a party! Create a Steering Committee.

- Initial meeting. To begin with you will have a group of people who have expressed interest in creating a Garden Wheel. Gather together around a potluck and explore your common interests, visions, and inspirations.
- Creating your "board". At this gathering, identify a group of people that are willing to work with you to organize your Garden Wheel.

## Step 2: Agree on the purpose of your Garden Wheel.

Different neighbor groups may have different ideas and reasons for creating a garden wheel. Being clear on your purpose will help assure that you have the same goals and expectations. Spend some time agreeing on the purpose of your group. It could include some or all of the following:

- To create back yard gardens in your neighborhood
- To support your neighborhood in the distribution and sharing of food grown locally
- To enjoy neighborhood work parties and potlucks
- To donate excess to local charities or food bank
- To educate your community in all aspects of food growing and preservation Other reasons

**Step 3: Decide who you will you include.** You may want to start your **Garden Wheel** with people you already know or may decide that it is a good opportunity to reach out to neighbors that you have not yet met. Ideas might include:

- The people on your block
- Your mother's club or another group that is already organized
- Your apartment complex
- The parents in your child's classroom
- Your local neighborhood, which can include several blocks

**Step 4: Develop guidelines.** The success of your Garden Wheel will be determined by the clarity of your guidelines. Guidelines should include the following:

- How often will you meet? Will you create an annual or monthly calendar?
- How will group members communicate with each other (e.g. phone, email)
- How will you track member participation? Will level of participation be used to determine when and whether a member can have a work party at their house?
- Who will direct the gatherings? Is there someone who has the skills to plan the overall picture and can designate tasks?
- Have a clear outline of the project and the expected outcome.
- Provide the necessary tools and materials.
- Allow enough time for the project to guarantee positive results.

## Garden Wheel Work Party Example

A neighbor wants to pull out some of her perennial beds and replace them with edibles.

- Outline the project and tools and materials needed. The neighbor should supply:
  - A design
  - Soil and amendments, mulch
  - Irrigation equipment, tools
  - Plants like lettuce, kale, artichokes, etc.
- The neighbor calls interested people beforehand- a phone call with encouragement to attend increases participation.
- Gather together to introduce each other and talk about the day. Determine the skill level of the attendees and their interests.
- Don't forget logistics and safety factors (e.g., water, sunscreen, tool safety, hats, gloves, etc.)
- Introduce planting techniques, mulching, irrigation for the inexperienced.
- Enjoy the fruit of your labor with a potluck. Share the day's experiences.
- Call attendees afterwards and thank them. Gratitude is important to nurture the Garden Wheel.

## Keys to success

- Create a predetermined schedule that is distributed annually or monthly so your membership can make plans to attend.
- Be sure that each work party is well organized. Don't bite off too much and know what you want to accomplish.
- Emphasize the importance of reciprocity, integrity and commitment. A successful Garden Wheel needs all members to contribute.
- Encourage members to attend with personal phone calls or visits.
- Create easy ways for members to be in contact. Create a contact list, list serve, or phone tree.
- Look at these gatherings as educational sharing and community building opportunities.
- Express gratitude after an event with a personal phone calls or visits.
- Tap into local knowledge.
- Have regular meetings and keep the ball rolling.
- Identify your resources for recruitment, grants, supplies, and tools (e.g. local neighborhood associations, city funds, tool library)
- Take pictures and have fun!!





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## General News

# Dallas City Council OKs urban garden ordinance after cornstalk debate

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By ELIZABETH FINDELL

Staff Writer

Published: 25 March 2015 11:17 PM

Updated: 25 March 2015 11:17 PM

A Dallas City Council discussion of cornstalks gave audience members an earful Wednesday and nearly stalled action on proposals intended to promote agriculture and the sale of fresh produce in the city.

In the end, the measures narrowly passed. They will allow Dallas gardeners to sell what they grow and expand the variety of farm products that can be raised.

The changes were recommended last month by the Plan Commission's Zoning Ordinance Committee after a tour of community gardens. The full Plan Commission and a City Council committee later concurred.

Gardening groups had complained that existing restrictions on the sale of fresh-grown produce are limiting the choices available to many consumers, especially in poorer areas where grocery stores are few and far between.

The changes will allow produce sales off site if a garden is in a residential area or on site if it's in a commercial area. They allow gardeners to keep chickens and fish, and they outline how tall raised gardening beds can be without counting as additional structures on the property.

On Wednesday, council members Sandy Greyson and Dwaine Caraway said they couldn't stomach the idea of sky-high cornstalks in the city, something they said the relaxed sales rules would encourage.

Greyson said there are "neighborhoods in this city that don't want people growing crops in their frontyard."

Council member Jennifer Staubach Gates weighed in with concerns about loosening restrictions, saying they could lead to more sheds and carports being put up in front of houses.

Council members Carolyn Davis and Scott Griggs disagreed with the concerns, noting that residents can already grow corn and they haven't noticed many cornfields in the city.

"I've only seen corn in one gentleman's yard ... and I think it's absolutely wonderful," Griggs said.

"In Oak Cliff, we may not have access to as many Central Markets or Whole Foods stores as people up north ... so I would certainly support anyone's right to grow fresh vegetables in their frontyard."

Greyson, Caraway, Gates, Adam Medrano, Monica Alonzo, Rick Callahan and Sheffie Kadane tried to delay passage of the changes by sending the matter back to committee.

When that effort failed on a tie vote, Medrano voted with Griggs, Davis, Philip Kingston, Jerry Allen, Lee Kleinman, Vonciel Jones Hill and Tennell Atkins to approve the changes.

Mayor Mike Rawlings was out of town.

The council also agreed to increase the number of days that farmers markets are allowed to sell, from 28 to 40, and to waive fees for the first year. They also increased the number of vendors allowed.

Urban agriculturalists said they were pleased. Susan Pollard, a beekeeper who served on a task force to promote gardening in the city, said she hoped leaders would become even more supportive as gardens flourish.

"All of this is growing pains," she said.

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## FAO's Programme for Urban and Peri-urban Horticulture

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### FAO's approach



### With micro-gardens, urban poor "grow their own"

*Leafy vegetables, tubers and herbs grown in simple containers help low-income families meet their daily needs for fresh, nutritious produce*

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To boost the overall supply of horticultural produce to the world's developing cities, FAO promotes the sustainable intensification of commercial market gardening on urban peripheries. In densely populated areas, it has a complementary strategy: to help low-income households improve their food and nutrition security by growing their own vegetables in micro-gardens.

"Micro-gardening" is the intensive cultivation of a wide range of vegetables, roots and tubers, and herbs in small spaces, such as balconies, patios and rooftops. While urban residents have long grown vegetables in backyard plots, modern micro-gardening makes use of containers such as plastic lined wooden crates, custom-built tables and even old car tyres. It integrates horticulture production techniques with environmentally friendly technologies suited to cities, such as rainwater harvesting and household waste management. Micro-gardens allow low-income families to meet their needs for vitamins, minerals and plant protein by providing direct access to fresh, nutritious vegetables every day. They also offer a source of extra income from the sale of small surpluses.

### Highly productive, easily managed

Micro-gardens are highly productive and can be easily managed by anyone - women, men, children, the elderly and the disabled. FAO studies show that a micro-garden of one square metre can produce any one of the following:

- around 200 tomatoes (30 kg) a year
- 36 heads of lettuce every 60 days

- 10 cabbages every 90 days
- 100 onions every 120 days

Where no land is available, vegetables can be planted in a container filled with garden soil or a "substrate" made from local materials, such as peanut shells, coconut fibre, rice husks, coarse sand or laterite. If substrates are unavailable, there is another option: growing the vegetables on water enriched with a soluble fertilizer.

A micro-garden can be grown on an area of just one square metre. Water requirements are modest, an important consideration in developing cities, where good quality water is often scarce and expensive. In a year, a one square metre micro-garden consumes about 1 000 litres of water, or less than 3 litres per day. To ensure a regular water supply, micro-gardeners can channel rainwater into storage via a system of gutters and pipes. Rainwater is virtually free (after the investment in harvesting equipment) and usually of good quality. From a roof of 20 sq m, growers can collect 2 000 litres of water for every 100 mm of rainfall, enough for the year-round cultivation of a micro-garden of two square metres. Keeping micro-gardens productive is also fairly simple. They can be fertilized regularly, at no cost, with compost produced from household organic waste. Pests are controlled by non-chemical means, including coloured sticky traps, insect proof nets and intercropping with aromatic herbs that naturally repel insects, such as basil, parsley and mint.

## Leafy greens in poor barrios

With FAO support, governments and municipal authorities have successfully launched micro-garden programmes in several Central and South American countries - a programme in Caracas helped 10 000 families in the city's poor barrios to grow leafy vegetables, cabbages, pumpkin, tomatoes and eggplant in micro-gardens. More recently, urban micro-gardens have been introduced in several African countries, including Gabon, Namibia, Niger, Senegal and Rwanda. FAO says low-income families master micro-garden technology very quickly. Micro-gardens are particularly popular with women, who use income from sales of surplus produce to improve their families' well-being. Studies in Senegal found that around 35% of produce is kept for home consumption, while the rest is sold. Typical income from a family microgarden of 10 sq m ranges from US\$15 to US\$30 a month.

To be successful, microgardening programmes should establish, at the outset, a training and demonstration centre, and identify local sources of inputs, such as containers, seeds, substrates and fertilizer. Creation of a local technical "help desk" (for example, in a municipal horticulture office), engagement of private sector suppliers, and partnerships between NGOs and community gardeners' associations contribute to the sustainability of micro-gardening programmes.





*Toggle menu* [#off-screen-nav]

# Gardening Without a Garden: *10 Ideas for Your Patio or Balcony*

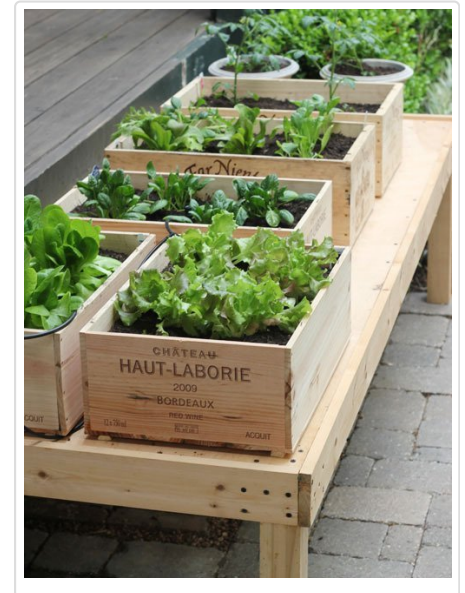
Renters Solutions

[<http://www.apartmenttherapy.com/gardening-without-a-garden-10-ideas-for-your-patio-or-balcony-renters-solutions-167221>]

Few things are more satisfying than growing your own food. Few things are more frustrating than being a garden lover trapped in a teeny-tiny apartment. What to do? Here are some gardening projects that will work on even the smallest patio or balcony...plus tips for growing citrus indoors if you don't have a balcony at all.

## TOP ROW:

1. Linsey of LLH Designs [<http://www.lhdesignsblog.com/2011/03/details-of-our-first-ever-garden.html>] planted herbs in wine boxes.
2. Increase growing space on a tiny balcony with this DIY pallet garden [<http://www.apartmenttherapy.com/diy-small-space-pallet-garden-143775>] .
3. Canning jars mounted to the wall [<http://www.apartmenttherapy.com/make-a-wall-mounted-spice-rack-155380>] are cute *and* practical.
4. Possibly the cheapest and easiest gardening idea I've seen yet...re-purpose an old shoe organizer [<http://www.apartmenttherapy.com/look-using-a-shoe-organizer-fo-90196>] .
5. Here's another vertical solution [<http://www.apartmenttherapy.com/a-vertical-salad-garden-go-gre-146588>] . You could grow an entire salad.



## BOTTOM ROW:

6. Gutters [[http://www.apartmenttherapy.com/15-repurposed-planters-just-ad-142393?image\\_id=2337284](http://www.apartmenttherapy.com/15-repurposed-planters-just-ad-142393?image_id=2337284)] easily mount to a wall or balcony railing for plants that don't have deep roots.
7. This patio garden [<http://www.apartmenttherapy.com/tiered-galvanized-herb-garden-the-vintage-wren-166165>] is made from a couple of galvanized tubs stacked together.
8. How to make a container water garden [<http://www.apartmenttherapy.com/container-water-120737>] .
9. If you're looking to grow larger plants, these self-irrigating planters [<http://www.insideurbangreen.org/2009/09/toronto-sip-balcony-garden-in-the-sky.html>] made from plastic tubs are a great idea.
10. For those of you with no outdoor space, here are some tips for growing citrus indoors [<http://www.apartmenttherapy.com/growing-citrus-indoors-129910>] . Bonus: your apartment will smell amazing.

*Re-edited from a post originally published March 8, 2012 - DF*

## You Might Also Like



## How to Make a Vegetable Garden on a Balcony or Patio (<http://renters.apartments.com/how-to-make-a-vegetable-garden-on-a-balcony-or-patio>)

Sarah Katz (<http://renters.apartments.com/sarah-katz>) | April 17, 2013

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The fact that you live in an apartment doesn't have to stop you from growing your own vegetables. As long as you have a balcony or a patio, some direct sunlight, and a way to provide your plants with water, everything else is quite easy. Successful apartment container gardeners (<http://ag.arizona.edu/pubs/garden/mg/vegetable/container.html>) know how to take advantage of every available inch of space, and we've got tips on how to make a vegetable garden on your apartment balcony or patio.

([cdn2.content.compendiumblog.com/import\\_uploads/a5d2fdfa-ecda-434a-b7c8-b0d555e9a4ed/ab63a57b1512e3d9717c738a645d60c1/Vegetable-Garden.jpg](http://cdn2.content.compendiumblog.com/import_uploads/a5d2fdfa-ecda-434a-b7c8-b0d555e9a4ed/ab63a57b1512e3d9717c738a645d60c1/Vegetable-Garden.jpg))

### Choose Your Location ([cdn2.content.compendiumblog.com/import\\_uploads/a5d2fdfa-ecda-434a-b7c8-b0d555e9a4ed/ea6244ebb76670c7e45a8b872c6422ad/E-545\\_vegetable\\_gardening\\_containers.pdf](http://cdn2.content.compendiumblog.com/import_uploads/a5d2fdfa-ecda-434a-b7c8-b0d555e9a4ed/ea6244ebb76670c7e45a8b872c6422ad/E-545_vegetable_gardening_containers.pdf))

When you are limited by available space, the choice of location is even more important. Vegetables need sufficient sunlight, and without adequate light, plant health suffers, and by extension, so will the amount of your harvest. Look for the places where you get sun throughout as much of the day as possible. Ideally, you want to find the southernmost location. If that isn't possible, an east or west facing location is adequate, as long as your vegetable plants will get sun for most of the day.

[back to top](#)

### **Find the Appropriate Containers (<http://extension.umd.edu/publications/pdfs/fs550.pdf>)**

Space efficiency is the key to getting the biggest harvest out of a small balcony or patio. If you have a patio, consider using the railing to hold some window boxes or other planters. Look for window boxes that have a built in water reservoir because these will keep your vegetables from drying out as quickly. Opt for containers made out of recycled plastic material. Clay pots absorb water, and that will also cause the pots to dry out faster.

The larger the pot, the less often you will have to water your plants. Larger containers will also provide your plants with more room to grow, while allowing you to plant them far enough apart that the entire plant sufficient sun exposure and air circulation. When considering the depth of your pots, especially if you are growing root vegetables, allow a minimum of two inches from roots of your plant to the bottom of the container.

Consider stacking containers ([http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/2011-01-09/features/fl-container-vegetables-010911-20110109\\_1\\_container-vegetables-hydroponics-small-plastic-pots](http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/2011-01-09/features/fl-container-vegetables-010911-20110109_1_container-vegetables-hydroponics-small-plastic-pots)). If you have patio, or a balcony above you, the pole can extend from the ground to the roof or balcony above you. There are systems you can purchase for doing this, but you can also create your own by using your patio or balcony railing. Those mesh produce baskets are also practical for people who have balconies or patios from which they can suspend heavy-duty plant hooks.

Plastic or metal garbage cans, plastic or wooden crates or even plastic storage boxes are suitable containers in which to grow vegetables. Just be sure to drill or punch holes in the bottom of the containers to provide adequate drainage. If you are using some type of wooden barrel or crate, be sure that the wood wasn't treated with a chemical preservative because this can seep into the soil.

### **What to Use as a Planting Medium (<http://extension.umd.edu/publications/pdfs/fs550.pdf>)**

Home improvement stores and garden centers routinely sell potting soil or container planting mixes. You will want to amend the planting medium to improve drainage and air flow. Buy an ordinary planting soil (make sure it is sterile,) some peat or peat moss and Perlite. As an alternative, if your garden center has a soil-less planting medium, purchase that and some soil and create your own container growing medium by mixing equal parts of the soil-less planting mix (typically a combination of equal parts of peat moss and vermiculite,) and regular soil.

### **Deciding What to Grow (<http://www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/plants/vegetables/gardening/hgic1251.html>)**

When space is at a premium, as is the case for apartment dwellers, the choice of what to plant is extremely important. Some vegetables can tolerate less sun than others. If you are growing fruit-bearing fruits or vegetables, understand that you need a minimum of five hours of consistent sun, but eight to ten hours is preferable. If you live in a place where you can shop at farmers markets, consider this when deciding what you're going to plant. It makes no sense to plant things that are readily available and cheap to buy.

Timing is another thing to think about when deciding what to plant. If you like radishes, lettuce, spinach and peas, these are all considered cool-weather crops, so you will grow and harvest them earlier than you would grow or harvest tomatoes. If you want to grow radishes or other root vegetables (all things that don't require as much sun,) be sure you find containers that are deep enough to allow the plants to create a good root since the root is the part that you eat.

If you want to grow lettuce, spinach, Swiss chard, radishes, peas or beans, you can grow all of these from seed without having to start the seeds inside in advance. If you want to grow other things such as tomatoes, peppers, broccoli, eggplant or other vegetables, you may want to consider buying starter plants. You can start these things from seed, you would need to have a warm, sunny location in which to do it, and you'd have to do it a minimum of two months before you wanted to plant them outside. You would also need to transplant them.



URBAN STYLE GARDENING | BALCONIES & SMALL SPACES

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## Getting Started: How to Start Your Apartment Garden Today

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There are several options for spaces to start your apartment garden. Here's seven of them.

- [How to Determine the Amount of Sunlight Your Garden Gets](#)

Figuring out how much sunlight your garden gets will help you to select what to grow.

- [Questions to Ask Yourself When Deciding What to Grow](#)

Since I get minimal sunlight, am growing in containers and use lots of greens that's what I'm growing most of. Answer these questions to help you figure out what you should grow.

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# Northridge CommUNITY Garden



Northridge Cooperative Homes is a cooperatively owned housing community in Bayview. In 2010, a coalition of residents interested in growing their own food, envisioned a garden on an empty lot within a fenced area of the co-op. They applied for and received a Community Challenge Grant from the City and County of San Francisco and a Program Bayview Heal Zone, the CommUNITY Garden was born. The Northridge CommUNITY Garden was built by residents and engages youth in stewarding the garden.

[Donate to Northridge CommUNITY Garden.](#)

<https://sfpt.ejoinme.org/MyPages/NorthridgeCommUNITYGarden/tabid/486903/Default.aspx>

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## Sacramento City Council approves urban farm ordinance

BY MARISSA LANG - [MLANG@SACBEE.COM](mailto:MLANG@SACBEE.COM)

03/24/2015 9:39 PM | Updated: 03/25/2015 12:08 PM



Yada Yisreal, 8, and Tirtsah Yisreal of Yisreal Family Farms tend to their family's half-acre of vegetable garden in October. The Yisreal family is at the forefront of the urban farming and sustainable agriculture movement, which was aided Tuesday by Sacramento's City Council passing a city farming ordinance.

ANDREW SENG / [ASENG@SACBEE.COM](mailto:ASENG@SACBEE.COM)

Buying locally sourced fruits and vegetables may soon become as simple as walking over to a neighbor's garden, thanks to a new urban farm ordinance passed Tuesday night by the Sacramento City Council.

In a 6-1 vote, the city effectively opened the door to minifarms on private properties and in vacant lots that would be able to sell produce out of urban farm stands, despite reservations from some council members about urban beekeeping and how urban agriculture may affect those who live close to the new farms.

The new ordinance enables city residents to grow and sell food directly from their properties and

offers tax incentives to landowners who allow their properties, including vacant lots in residential, commercial, industrial and manufacturing zones throughout the city, to be turned into minifarms. The farms would be restricted to 3 acres.

The aim, in part, is to reduce urban blight and bring fruit and vegetables to so-called “food insecure” populations, whose access to fresh produce has been limited by a lack of healthy options in low-income neighborhoods.

A 2009 study by the U.S. Department of Agriculture found that 23.5 million people do not have access to a supermarket within a mile of their home.

Urban farm stands in residential neighborhoods would be restricted to operating Tuesdays and Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., except those on vacant lots, which would be allowed to operate without time or day restrictions.

Advocates of urban farming played on Sacramento’s campaign to market itself as the farm-to-fork capital of the country and challenged the city to get farm food to “every fork.”

More than 100 people packed the council chambers to support the ordinance.

James Brady, a self-proclaimed urban farmer who works as an aquaponics consultant, told the council that the benefits to low-income communities and people extend beyond the nutrition. He said giving people the opportunity to sell the food they produce would grow a new population of entrepreneurs and allow low-income people to grow their own food and earn additional income by selling to their neighbors.

Representatives from the Southeast Asian American community said another, less visible benefit to low-income and immigrant communities is purpose, pride and empowerment.

“My family arrived in this country with very few skills and spoke no English,” said Cha Vang, an organizer with Hmong Innovating Politics. “But my mom knew that she could always rely on her ability to grow, cultivate and garden anything, anywhere. Not only did gardening empower her, it also provided our family’s dinner table with fresh produce when most other low-income families had to settle for unhealthy fast food.”

More than 300 Sacramento residents signed a petition asking the council to pass the ordinance, according to the Sacramento Urban Agriculture Coalition.



In passing the urban farm ordinance, Sacramento followed the lead of several cities around country that have looked to inner-city agriculture to combat blight and produce more fresh fruits and vegetables in neighborhoods with few grocery stores. Among them: Los Angeles, San Francisco, Portland and Seattle.

The ordinance's passage Tuesday was not without concerns from council members.

Councilwoman Angelique Ashby said in Natomas, properties are often divided up among several people or families. She worried that the person with control of the yard could unilaterally make a decision to delve into urban farming without consulting with other people in the property.

Councilman Larry Carr, the lone no vote on the measure, worried about the urban beekeeping aspects of the ordinance and asked whether the insects could be contained or kept away from people. In an attempt to quell his concerns, Councilman Jeff Harris, himself a beekeeper, invited Carr to his home.

Prior to passing the ordinance, agriculture activity – growing produce for sale – was only allowed in specially zoned lots.

New urban farmers would be subject to city water conservation ordinances and would be required to adhere to the same restrictions as other outdoor water users.

Anyone attempting to sell their produce out of an urban farm stand would be required to obtain a business operations tax certificate, city officials said Tuesday. For a stand that earns less than \$10,000 per year, a certificate would cost \$31.

No liability insurance would be required.

Tax incentives for lot owners who allow their property to be turned into minifarms could add up to \$6,127 an acre each year, according to Sacramento city staff estimates, but a New York City study found community gardens boosted the values of nearby properties.

*Call The Bee's Marissa Lang, (916) 321-1038 (tel:(916)%20321-1038). Follow her on Twitter at @Marissa\_Jae ([https://twitter.com/Marissa\\_Jae](https://twitter.com/Marissa_Jae)).*

## **Comments (2) (#tabs-b0710947-1-tabPane-2)**

# Shared neighborhood gardens offer a fresh approach

By **MARY MACVEAN**

MAY 6, 2009

**T**he front yard at Lexi Conrad and Joshua Mogin's house one recent Sunday morning felt like a Larchmont Village version of a barn raising.

Before the party was over, much of the front lawn was gone. In its place were rows of tomatoes, eggplant, beans, squash and more -- 288 plants in all. Wooden stakes were pounded into the ground for a grape arbor to surround the garden. Volunteers shoveled and scattered compost, planted and carried.

In gratitude for such labor, a farm family might have served ham and scalloped-potato casserole or chess pie; Conrad offered bagels and fruit for the volunteers who showed up to plant 400 square feet of food crops for their urban farm, which is intended to help feed 12 families.

The planting at their house, and one at another nearby, was organized by **Heart Beet Gardening**, a company owned by three young women who share with many people around the country a penchant for urban farming. Heart Beet's goal is to bring together people who have yard space with people who want super-local produce. The women provide most of the labor and everyone gets to eat what grows, in a twist on a movement called Community Supported Agriculture.

Edible, or kitchen, gardens are riding a wave of popularity. The L.A. Garden Show last weekend adopted the theme "A Festival of Flavors." Los Angeles County has 66 **community gardens**, many with years-long waiting lists. And Santa Monica is setting up a registry so residents who want gardens without gardening can offer their land to someone willing to do the work.

By the time everyone had left Conrad and Mogin's house, the front yard was like no other on the block. Curious passersby could read a sign informing them: "Your neighbor is growing food in her front yard. She is part of a neighborhood-based urban farm project with Heart Beet Gardening. This garden and . . . others like it in the area will be growing uber-local, more than organic produce all summer long. Love it? Hate it? Want a bite?"

Conrad and her family moved to Los Angeles four years ago from New York City, where they belonged to the Park Slope Food Coop in Brooklyn. Here, Conrad says, they found the

supermarkets full of "all these weird, Stepford wife fruits and vegetables." She began looking for alternatives and when they bought their house, they put in some native and edible plants. But that was not quite enough.

"I had wanted to get rid of this lawn and do something more Earth-friendly," Conrad says.

At the same time, the women of Heart Beet Gardening were trying to get their urban Community Supported Agriculture project off the ground. CSA is a growing movement usually organized around a farm. Members buy a stake in the farm's operation; in return, they get a share of the weekly harvest, while also accepting a share in the risk inherent in agriculture. There are hundreds of such projects around the country.

Another urban-grown-produce subscription program operates near downtown, providing food to 40 or 50 families for as little as \$10 a bag, says Neelam Sharma, executive director of Community Services Unlimited Inc., which runs that program as well as other food programs such as school gardens, a produce stand and youth training. The food is grown at community centers, schools and homes, as well as on farms near L.A.

In a city neighborhood, a CSA also aims to create a community feeling, says Sara Carnochan, one of the women of Heart Beet.

### **Lots of opportunity**

Since January 2007, as she and partners Kathleen Redmond and Megan Bomba planted several dozen private edible gardens at homes around Los Angeles, they began thinking about how much urban space was available for planting.

"It became apparent that Los Angeles needed saving. It sounds presumptuous -- not that we are going to save Los Angeles," Redmond says. But, she says, they decided they needed to do their part by trying to turn some urban spaces into food gardens.

For Mogin and Conrad, taking part in a CSA meant "doing something that more people can participate in," Mogin says.

"It's organic fruits and vegetables. My daughter likes gardening. It's just a great combination," says Mogin, a real estate lawyer who recalls gardening as a child at his grandfather's upstate New York home.

Their daughter Madeleine, a second-grader at the Larchmont Charter School, which has an organic garden where children play and grow food, says she is happy to have a garden in her front yard. "We're going to feed six families, and, for another thing, I just really like gardening," she

says.

Nearby, her younger sister Joy picks up a worm and asks about it. "I think earthworms are the same on both ends," Mogin replies. In response, Joy drops the worm on her bare foot to watch what it might do.

It's just this sort of knowledge he and Conrad hope the girls will get.

### **More on the horizon**

Heart Beet Gardening lined up another 400-square-foot plot just a few blocks away, which they planted Sunday. Ten additional families subscribed to the CSA and for \$100 a month, they will get a share in what the women harvest starting, they hope, in mid-June. The two families with the gardens paid about \$1,000 each; they get the help of Heart Beet Gardening in growing their fruits and vegetables, plus they can pick anything they want to eat in addition to their weekly allotments.

In the fall, Heart Beet plans to add a third garden, this one 900 square feet, and six to nine more subscribers.

"When we started this whole thing, we always reminded ourselves that this is a trial," Carnochan says. "We don't know if it will work, but it's looking very sunny, very, very sunny."

On the Sunday morning they planted Mogin and Conrad's lawn, they hammered in the wood stakes for the grapevines. To kill the grass in an Earth-friendly way, they instructed the volunteers to layer newspaper on the lawn, hose it down and top it with a layer of compost from the five cubic yards they had brought in their white Dodge pickup. Finally, that got covered in mulch to help keep moisture in the ground.

Throughout the day, people came and went, bringing children or shovels, or both, even a wheelbarrow to help distribute the compost. Twenty or so volunteers helped out.

"Oh, here come some people with their shovels. I don't even know them," Conrad said.

One of them was Sinh Trinh. "I'd like to be part of the movement toward local agriculture and supplying local food," said Trinh, a first-grade teacher at Charles White Elementary School near MacArthur Park, who isn't a gardener but was eager to learn.

Somebody sent Teresa Feldman a Web link to a notice about the garden planting, so she came. She and her son have a garden in the yard of their duplex. She planned to join the CSA, saying, "This is worth supporting, and I'm happy to give my labor over to it."

[mary.macvean@latimes.com](mailto:mary.macvean@latimes.com)





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## Solution 4: Shared and Community Gardens

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With half of the world's population living in cities, growing food locally requires us to find space between buildings, parking lots, and streets. Available land exists in many places—vacant lots, undeveloped regions, and private yards. Together, these spaces constitute a large amount of land and could feed significant portions of urban populations, if shared and cultivated.

Urban gardens are a proven solution to food crises elsewhere in the world. Following trade and oil embargos in the early 1990s, for example, Cuba's large-scale industrial agriculture system experienced a meltdown. As a result, people began to plant food gardens in every plot of available land in urban areas. Cuba was able to avert a crisis by taking advantage of land resources, quite literally, in its backyard. Mexico, Kenya, Ghana, Argentina, and the Philippines have all made extensive use of urban gardens.

### VICTORY GARDENS

During World Wars I and II, more than a third of our vegetables were produced in "victory gardens"—small gardens planted in yards and vacant lots. The government encouraged people to cultivate every unused plot of land as a way to reduce the burden on railroads and other means of transportation, reduce demand for material used in food processing and canning, make more food available to armed forces, and maintain the morale of American civilians. Today, there is a growing movement to revive victory gardens. San Francisco, for example, has funded projects to convert yards and unused lands into organic food production, and even installed a victory garden in front of city hall. For more information, see [www.sfvictorygardens.org](http://www.sfvictorygardens.org).

In addition to meeting our need for food, urban gardens bring a variety of benefits to our communities by:

- creating habitats for birds, insects, and native plants
- cleaning polluted city air
- providing local job opportunities
- creating a beautiful setting where people can socialize and build community
- providing a positive and healthy activity for everyone, and
- raising property values.

### Back and Front Yard Gardens

When people with yards get together with people who love to garden, many sharing arrangements are possible:

- Several neighbors might get together to plant and tend a vegetable garden in one neighbor's yard.
- A group of neighbors could agree to help each other garden and share their harvests. One neighbor grows a lot of tomatoes, another has three fruit trees, and a third has a large herb garden.
- A garden matchmaking website or organization can connect garden enthusiasts and people with yard space to share.

**EXAMPLE:** A group of volunteers in Berkeley, California recently collected names and addresses of 300 city residents, each of whom had either a yard to share or an interest in gardening in someone else's yard. They held meetings and divided attendees into groups based on neighborhood. From those meetings, many informal garden-sharing relationships formed. Similar organizations in Portland, Oregon and Canada have created websites to help link people interested in sharing a garden. For an example of such a match-making website, see [www.yardsharing.org](http://www.yardsharing.org).

- A neighbor might invite everyone on her block to four Saturday gardening parties, with a promise to share the harvest with everyone involved.
- A homeowner could invite a local nonprofit garden organization to use his front lawn to grow vegetables and create a community demonstration garden.

Sharing and gardening go well together. When groups of people garden together, each brings different skills, tools, and knowledge. More people keep an eye on the garden, making sure it's watered and watching out for pests. And everyone can help eat all of those green beans.

**EXAMPLE:** Mel and Cara bought a house with a large front lawn. During a block party, they met many of their new neighbors, including residents of a large apartment building down the street. One family from the apartment building, the Postles, talked about their interest in growing vegetables, but lamented the fact that they had no yard. Mel and Cara invited them to help install a vegetable garden in their yard. They all agreed that the Postles would cultivate and tend half the yard, and Mel and Cara would take care of the other half. While they did not create a written agreement, they had a thorough discussion about the arrangement. They discussed issues such as what would be planted, whether any

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 **Want to know more about planting a food garden?** Take a look at *Food Not Lawns: How to Turn Your Yard into a Garden and Your Neighborhood into a Community*, by Heather Coburn Flores (Chelsea Green). Also, check out the resources listed in Appendix A.

A community garden is a place where people can come together to help grow food. The gardens educate, provide food, and create a pleasant space for people to be together.

There are many different ways to set up community gardens. Some community gardens are overseen by nonprofits and have volunteers help in all aspects of gardening. Other gardens are divided into individually assigned plots (see "Garden Allotments," below).

Collecting and growing heirloom plant varieties is becoming increasingly popular—it's fun, it yields interesting strains of fruits and vegetables, and it helps us preserve and appreciate the diversity of edible plants that have developed throughout history. It's also an important part of food security. Large-scale commercial agriculture has led to a loss of about 75% of the genetic diversity in crop varieties. Preserving and sharing the remaining varieties will help us re-establish diversity.

A great way to do this is through a seed library, which collects, catalogs, and shares seeds. For example, the Bay Area Seed Interchange Library (BASIL) allows members to “check out” seeds, grow them into plants, and then harvest some of the seeds to replenish and grow the library.

What do you need to start a seed library? Lots of envelopes, some enthusiastic gardeners, and a good lesson on seed saving. One helpful resource is *Seed Sowing and Saving: Step-by-Step Techniques for Collecting and Growing More Than 100 Vegetables, Flowers, and Herbs*, by Carole B. Turner (Storey's Gardening Skills Illustrated).

Organized efforts by community members could transform a city landscape into a garden paradise. Even in the most populated cities, there are vacant lots everywhere, many owned by the city itself. For example, New York City owns about 14,000 vacant lots, on which there are hundreds of community gardens. The remaining lots are privately owned. San Francisco, a mere seven by seven-mile peninsula, has at least 5,000 empty lots, of which more than half are privately owned. The potential is huge.

If community members and organizations want to use a vacant lot for gardening, it's a good idea to enter into a written agreement or lease with the landowner. An agreement between a small group of individuals and a landowner is shown below.

This garden sharing agreement is made between Marcel Paez ("Marcel") and Leticia Houston, Reyanna Carabay, and Robert Mayhem, (collectively referred to as "Gardeners"). Marcel owns a vacant lot located at 12461 Ethel Avenue in Van Nuys, CA. Marcel thinks that a garden would be a nice addition to the neighborhood. Gardeners are a loose affiliation of friends with an interest in farming and a desire to plant a vegetable garden on Marcel's lot.

1. Marcel agrees to allow Gardeners daytime access to the lot for the purpose of installing and maintaining a small vegetable garden beginning on the date this agreement is signed.
2. Gardeners will plant and tend vegetables, fruit, and herbs on the lot year round.
3. Gardeners have made separate arrangements with a neighbor to use that neighbor's water and store hoses, gardening tools, and supplies in that neighbor's shed.
4. Marcel agrees that Gardeners may invite guests onto the lot to visit the garden or to help with the garden, as long as at least one of the Gardeners is with the guests at the garden. If Gardeners wish to give anyone else regular and unsupervised access to the garden, they must first receive Marcel's permission. Marcel encourages Gardeners to invite and include neighbors in the garden project. Gardeners may invite neighbors to periodic "garden parties."
5. Gardeners may construct raised beds on the lot. Construction of a shed or greenhouse must first be approved by Marcel and by the local building department (if necessary).
6. Gardeners are responsible for all costs related to the garden, including but not limited to, soil, tools, water, seeds, seedlings, and fertilizer.
7. All fruits, vegetables, and herbs grown on the lot will be consumed by the Gardeners, shared with Marcel, given to neighbors or friends, or donated to charity. Gardeners will not sell the produce and do not intend to profit from the arrangement.
8. Gardeners agree to tend the land responsibly and use organic farming methods if possible. Gardeners will take care to ensure that water runoff, dust, or noise do not bother neighbors. Gardeners will maintain a tidy appearance on the lot. Gardeners will take care to remove hazards from the lot, including but not limited to holes, sharp objects, or items that could cause people to trip and fall.
9. Gardeners, as consideration for the right to use garden on Marcel's land, agree not to make a claim against or sue Marcel for injury, loss, or damage that occur on Marcel's land, including for injury, loss, or damage arising from the negligence of Marcel. Harvesters agree to indemnify, hold harmless, and defend Marcel from all claims, liability, or demands that Harvesters or any third party may have or in the future make against Marcel for injury, loss, or damage arising from gardening on Marcel's land or consuming food grown on the land.
10. Marcel or the Gardeners may terminate this agreement at any time, with or without cause. Gardeners understand that at some point in the future, Marcel may want to sell or build on the lot.



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11. At the termination of the agreement, Gardeners will remove all possessions from the property. Marcel will not require removal of the plants, but Gardeners may remove plants in order to plant them elsewhere.

12. If a conflict arises between us that we are not able to resolve through discussion, we agree to attend at least one mediation session with a mediator we all agree on, and to share the cost of the mediation.

\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_ Date

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### Garden Allotments

Garden allotments are a type of community garden that usually involves dividing land into small plots, sometimes as small as 25 to 100 square feet, and allowing people or groups to rent them or use them free to grow vegetables for their own consumption. It's a great way to transform a vacant lot into a wonderful community space.

The city of Seattle, Washington sponsors a "P-Patch" program, whereby citizens can sign up to garden in one of more than 2,500 plots in 70 neighborhood gardens throughout the city. Garden allotments are very common in England and derive from a tradition that is centuries old. Garden allotments are also used in poverty-stricken countries and urban areas to battle hunger and poverty.

**Want to find a garden plot?** If you are interested in finding a garden plot near you, call around to local community garden organizations and find out whether there are plots available. If not, let your local city government know about Seattle's P-Patch program, an excellent example of a city-sponsored garden allotment program.

### Selling What You Grow

If you plan to sell your produce, be sure to find out what regulations will apply. For example, if you plan to set up a small weekly farm stand, check your state's laws governing farm stands and local zoning laws. Laws governing farm stands generally encourage people to sell what they grow themselves, and may restrict sale of packaged or processed foods or produce that isn't grown by the farmer. Zoning laws may also prohibit or require a permit for roadside stands in residential areas.

**Want more information about selling what you grow?** Take a look at *Backyard Market Gardening*, by Andy W. Lee and Patricia L. Foreman (Good Earth Publications) and *Micro Eco-Farming: Prospering from Backyard to Small Acreage in Partnership With the Earth*, by Barbara Berst Adams (New World Publishing).

### FARMER COOPERATIVES

In the United States, there are at least 3,000 farmer cooperatives, also called agricultural cooperatives. Farmer cooperatives provide services, supplies, and marketing to independent farmers who collectively own and govern them, which allows independent farmers to compete with large industrial agriculture operations. Cooperatives can purchase supplies in bulk or purchase equipment and machinery for farmers to share. Some cooperatives also provide services, such as hulling, storage, processing, packing, marketing, and distributing food.

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## FOOD &amp; DRINK

## URBAN GARDENING ON THE RISE ATOP DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES SKYSCRAPERS

The towers of glass, steel and concrete that rise above downtown Los Angeles might not seem like the most logical place to farm for food, but think again. Urban gardening is a growing trend.

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By Robert Holguin

Wednesday, November 12, 2014

DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES (KABC) -- The towers of glass, steel and concrete that rise above downtown Los Angeles might not seem like the most logical place to farm for food, but think again. Urban gardening is a growing trend.

Farmscape is a local company that specializes in building urban gardens. Company rep Dan Allen says L.A.'s high-rise rooftops are actually an ideal place for herbs, vegetables and even fruit trees. He says downtown's housing boom has resulted in a big increase in urban gardeners.

"We have a year-round growing climate and we have a history as the country's largest agricultural producer. I think we'll see more of it in coming years," Allen said.

Allen helped build a rooftop garden on what was a paddle tennis court atop the Jonathan Club on 6th and Figueroa streets.

"It's about 50 steel tanks. We filled them with organic soil and we're growing fresh ingredients for their on-site restaurant," Allen described.

The garden was the centerpiece of an informational tour Tuesday touting the benefits of urban gardens.

An organization called Seedstock sponsored Tuesday's event.



"It's an increase in the lifespan of the roof. It also creates a new revenue stream for a space that otherwise is just sitting here," said Jason Reed with Seedstock.

Proponents of these urban rooftop gardens say downtown L.A. is a perfect location because it has so many rooftops. But more importantly, they say more and more people want to feel connected to the food they eat.

Jason McClain, the executive chef at the Jonathan club, says it's all about the quality.

"When I cut an heirloom tomato at 5 o'clock and I serve it at 6 o'clock, I know there is no better tomato salad in the city than the one I just made," McClain.

Other downtown restaurants are doing the same thing, even when the roof isn't available. A small garden at Artisan House provides the kitchen and bar with fresh herbs.

"Chefs are using what's produced in their kitchens because they know their customers appreciate fresh, local food," said Rachel Surls with UC Cooperative Extension.

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# Why Micro-Gardening Could Go Big

JULY 09, 2013 12:12 PM ET

ELIZA BARCLAY



The Nourishmat, which is inspired by Square Foot Gardening, makes it easy to grow 15 to 20 pounds of food in a small space with a plastic mat that serves as a garden planting guide.

*Courtesy of Earth Starter*

Most urban consumers are happy to leave farming to the farmers, but for those with a green thumb, it is getting easier to garden in the city. That's thanks, in part, to DIYers sharing ideas for reusing old materials to garden in and a new range of tools designed to get many more people involved with growing some of their own food.

The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization has lately been talking about micro-gardens as critical way to help the urban poor get more food on the table. The FAO defines micro-gardens intensively cultivated small spaces — such as balconies, small yards, patios and rooftops. Many rely on containers such as plastic-lined wooden boxes, trash cans and even old car tires.

While it's probably tough to sustain a family on a micro-garden, FAO research shows that a well-tended micro-garden of 11 square feet can produce as much as 200 tomatoes a year, 36 heads of lettuce every 60 days, 10 cabbages every 90 days, and 100 onions every 120 days.

Sure, micro-gardens can easily be created out of plenty of scrap materials: potatoes grown in a bucket or trash can, for example, or wooden pallets turned into an herb garden. Anne Gibson, an Australian who runs The Micro Gardener website, has aggregated many of the most creative ideas. And for folks who don't want to DIY it, several companies are also making it easy to start a micro-garden with an array of new products.

Earth Starter is one such start-up. This month, the company launched a Kickstarter campaign to manufacture more of its all-in-one roll out garden tool, called a Nourishmat. The Nourishmat, which is inspired by Square Foot Gardening, makes it easy to grow a lot of food in a 4-foot by 6-foot space by turning a plastic mat into a garden planting guide.

The mat comes with seedballs (seeds mixed with clay and worm castings to enrich the soil, and chili powder to keep pests away). To plant, you simply lay out the mat on top of a bed of soil, then stick the seedballs for the 18 different vegetables and herbs in their respective holes. (Urban residents who may have soil contaminated with lead and other heavy metals will have to build a raised bed and fill it with clean soil.) The mat

also doubles as a weed barrier.



Earth Starter launched a Kickstarter campaign on July 1 to raise money to manufacture more Nourishmats.

*Courtesy of Earth Starter*

John Gorby and Phil Weiner, who founded the company in 2011 while they were undergraduates at the University of Maryland, College Park, believe that there's a big market of people who want to garden but need this kind of help.

"Everyone in the world should have a victory garden," says Weiner, referring to the food gardens that thousands of citizens of the U.S, U.K. and elsewhere planted during WWI and WWII to improve their food security.

"But the most common excuses we heard for why more people don't spend more time gardening were 'I don't know what I'm doing,' or 'I don't have time,' or 'I don't have space,' " Weiner tells The Salt. He grew up gardening with his family in Washington,



D.C.

So far, Weiner and his partner have beta-tested the product with people in 22 states. They estimate that users can grow \$200 worth of produce in one season and 25 to 30 pounds of food in a year. The mats can be replanted for three to five years, Weiner says.

Right now, the mats are only available to people who donate to the Kickstarter fund, but Weiner and Gorby hope to raise enough money to eventually manufacture them on a big enough scale to sell nationwide. Weiner says he expects to charge \$40 for the basic kit, and \$79 for a deluxe kit with an irrigation system.

Nourishmats may be an intriguing option for people with small yards, but what's an apartment dweller to do? Fortunately, there has been an explosion in indoor or balcony hydroponic systems. We covered the window farming movement a few years back, and it's still going strong.

And recently, Treehugger.com put together a slideshow of 12 different plug-and-play hydroponic systems for indoor micro-gardening, ranging from aeroponics, a method of growing plants in hanging containers with little to no soil, to aquaponics, which involves growing plants (or fish) directly in water.

Plastic and ceramic pots and wooden boxes are also tried-and-true containers for gardening on balconies and deck, but there's been innovation in these containers, too. A few companies have developed polypropylene bags – designed to be porous and lightweight – for growing potatoes, tomatoes, peppers and other crops. According to Gardener's Supply, one company that sells these grow bags, polypropylene fabric is superior because it "'breathes' and 'air-prunes' roots."

gardening