



A GUIDE TO
URBAN
GARDENING

**GROWING FOOD
FOR PROFIT IN
SMALL SPACES**



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INTRODUCTION

Would you like to be paid for your passion? That's exactly what I enjoy on daily basis. Every day, I wake up to the mesmerizing sight of colorful plants ornamented with a variety of vegetables and fruits. After waking up from my bed, I go to my garden to pluck some fresh fruits for my breakfast. Isn't that amazing? It is, indeed.

Are you tired of your hectic schedules and your stressful life and wish to elope from your tiring work routine and escape into the wilderness of nature? Then, cheer up! Because urban gardening is all set to help you enjoy the taste of both city and village life.

Cities are home to the majority of the world's people, resulting in severe environmental challenges. By 2022, there will be more than 500 cities with populations of one million or more. The average population of the world's 100 largest cities will be 8.5 million, up from about 7.6 million as of 2011. Isn't that startling? I was surprised too but, unfortunately, these economic giants bear the brunt of environmental and resource-use concerns.

On top of that COVID-19 pandemic made people much more insecure. People all across the world began producing and storing their food at home or in their local communities to ensure they had adequate food supplies in the event of an emergency. More than two-thirds of new gardeners in Canada and the U.S. were inspired by the disease. Do you feel left out? Don't worry! It's never too late.

Growing plantations in your very own gardens, I feel, is more essential now than it has ever been for leading a healthy lifestyle in the city. Growing plants and food crops in and around cities and towns, as well as accompanying activities such as food production and transportation, processing and marketing, etc., characterize urban gardening in the new world.

There has been a rise in the popularity of urban agriculture, which employs city space, labor, and water to produce food. This, in turn, is part of a larger trend towards environmental sustainability and social justice. Some examples of urban agricultural endeavors include commercial urban gardens, community gardens, backyards, and schoolyards, as well as

rooftop gardens. Most goods from urban gardens are covered by local permissions and licensing. Due to a lack of land and the dependence on food imports, vertical and rooftop farming has caught on in locations where land is hard to come by.

A shocking fact confronting many cities in developing nations today is that the urban population, particularly the poorest households, has inadequate nutrition, widespread poverty, and few prospects for formal work. But no challenge is insurmountable! While on the positive side, city-regions have emerged as the focal points for a wide range of poverty-reduction and livelihood-improvement strategy planning. Thus, in and around cities, several types of agricultural production have been driven by using closeness to markets and resources that are both abundant and inexpensive, such as urban organic waste and wastewater. Consumable items, such as green leafy vegetables, milk, eggs, and meat, are commonly exploited in the planning of projects, and they make use of unoccupied open spaces. That is one symbol of sustainability. Many more are yet to come.

Urban gardening undoubtedly helps cities face the challenges they are now experiencing. However, we must exercise caution! The hazards of making this choice may go beyond what was predicted, as it can potentially have detrimental repercussions if certain related dangers are not recognized and adequate preventive and guiding steps are not implemented. The social, economic, political, ecological, and geographical systems in the cities have a lot of variation in the different systems, their number, and how they interact. The systems were built to adapt to the constantly changing cityscapes to assume new roles, one of these being food supply and income generation. Urban agriculture has now started to take on an increasingly prominent role in environmental management, landscape design, and biodiversity conservation, and in offering frivolous services, to name a few.

You may be wondering, "How am I to begin a garden without prior knowledge or experience?" A lack of knowledge or room isn't an excuse for not starting a garden! Hundreds of people with no prior gardening expertise have gone on to have great success as urban gardeners. Five years ago, I too had to start from zero. My garden and shop are now operating smoothly and I'm making good money. This book will teach you how to turn your lawns,

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backyards, rooftops, and balconies into miniature gardens and dig into the detail of garden design, cultivation, harvest, and the business of urban gardening.

Isn't it enthralling to learn so much about the elasticity and multi-functionality of Urban Gardening, let alone practice it? So what are you waiting for? Let's leap into the future with a new and unique mindset of experiencing nature.

SAMPLE

CHAPTER 1: FUNDAMENTALS OF URBAN AND SUB-URBAN GARDENING

As the day would approach its inevitable end, you'd be watering your tiny vegetables that had just sprouted from the ground. You would sit there surrounded by an aura of gratitude for the abundant healthy food you're growing. Isn't it a rejuvenating activity to help you recover after a long day's work? I am sure, it is. After that, you can only grin, and everything around you flowers with joy. Do you want to spend a lot of money on costly veggies from the supermarket or produce your own in an urban garden? I'm quite sure you went with option two.

But the question that lingers in everyone's mind is: "How do we find time to explore Mother Nature". Many of us, myself included, spend the majority of our waking hours in front of a computer or behind the wheel. The solution? Bring Mother Nature into your house!



View of my backyard garden

Advantages of Being an Urban Gardener

1. Market Access

Market access has to be the greatest advantage on the top of the ladder. Living in the city means that you don't have to travel large distances to sell your product, and often, your product will sell itself. Take my example, when I deliver to restaurants in the downtown core, I am a five-minute bike ride away from them which saves a lot of time and energy in transport. Isn't that cool? Also not to forget the sheer pride with which chefs boast this advantage to their customers. Surely, my vegetables got famous for that and I couldn't be happier because this means business!



Vegetables placed at a stall in the market

Did I mention that I can go the home quickly to harvest more greens, bring them back to the market, and bag them up there in case the stock of items finishes? Probably in some 30 minutes. So, tell me, what other farmer is capable of doing that?

2. Low Start-Up and Overhead

One of the best things about urban gardening is that it's so simple to get started. There's no need to invest in pricey land or heavy machinery because the land is readily available just about everywhere. When your infrastructure is both modest and affordable, you may earn enough money to make a living on a little plot of land.

3. Better Growing Conditions

Another blessing in disguise of farming in cities is the heat island effect which makes it a few degrees warmer than the countryside. Trying to figure out why that's a good thing? Let me explain! With concrete and buildings towering up in urban areas, the city absorbs heat during the day into all that thermal mass and releases it when the sun goes down. This effect is even more conspicuous in summers. I live in climate **Zone 6** of the downtown of my city, and people just a mile and a quarter out are in climate zone 5. There are a significantly greater number of frost-free days between the two options. I have at least 30 frost-free days in the city center than in the entirety of my neighborhood. Honestly, the city works wonders sometimes!

Each urban plot will also have unique features, thus some plots are better suited to growing particular crops than others. As a result, you'd have a wide range of growth conditions at your disposal for your garden. Additionally, it's a great help in building microclimates. When buildings, walls, and fences surround agricultural plots, there are lower chances of damaged crops and falling fruits because of the wind. Did I hear a sigh of relief or was it the birds in the background?

4. Access to Water

Many rural farmers would be marveling at a life where water is just a twist of a hand away. You got that right! Being an urban farmer means getting a clean and ample supply of water without having to wait seasons and seasons for water to swell up in rivers during spring and can quickly nourish fresh and healthy fruits. Voilà! What a fast layover of your vegetables at your food stall.



Watering your plants with a shower pipe

5. The Social Connection

Have you ever heard the word “social capital”? No? Well, let me give you an insight. Social capital is the connection that you develop with people over time that can blossom into many opportunities like favors, networks, and influence. And this is one golden opportunity in the case of urban gardening. Because over the years, several of my customers were largely my neighbors. Seeing me watering plants and humming poems as I sowed seeds attracted a conversation which often drooled to “oh so you sell these at the stall around the corner?” and “The spinach looks good”. And boom, I got new customers! Not only do they become shoppers, but they end up bringing their friends too, who also become customers. So as the sun sets, not only do I earn money but also develop a friendly socialization opportunity to relieve the day-long stress.

An Urban Farm

Urban gardening comprises community gardens, urban farms, community-supported agriculture, and farmers' markets.



A tidy front yard vegetable garden

Urban gardening isn't restricted to having any fancy location or size of the area. Any suitable rooftop, landfill, brownfield, or area where housing or industry are demolished can serve your purpose. However, producing food for the population holds regulations, including limitations on raising animals with the consequence that the majority of urban farms don't keep animals for production purposes

There are multiple sorts of urban farms: commercial farms, community gardens, and backyard gardens. Community gardens are a large number of lands that are separated into smaller plots for every household's use whereas urban backyard gardens are plots around homes, including pretty balconies, decks, and green rooftops. Backyard gardeners grow or

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raise foodstuffs, honey, small animals, and fish. I'm sure your home would have an aesthetically pleasant vibe if it is surrounded by plants. So, are you all set to turn your residence into something out of a fairytale? Continue to read to find out more!

An Urban gardener's Place in the Community

1. More than Just a gardener

To broaden your professional horizons, urban farming is a must. As an urban gardener, I enjoyed lecturing people in my neighborhood about food gardening, and I also got to function as a broker for rural farmers by assisting them in making use of the connections I've made since moving to town.

So, if you want to add splashes of versatility and energy into your life, then grab your spade and be on the move.

2. The Frontier of Localization

One of the most unexpected yet amazing consequences of urban farming was that I became the leader of the local food movement, not only because I was growing food to feed locals, but also because I was showing ways to farm.

Would you believe me if I told you that in the regions where I began gardening, at least 10 other individuals also became passionate about gardening? It's hard to tell if they started gardening because of me, but while I've been farming in their area, people have learned a lot about how to produce food intensively, which has inspired them to either start gardening or expand their gardens.



Neighbors gardening in their lawn

So, turns out, an ordinary man like me is now leading the regional food crusade. And you know what? It feels amazing!!!!

3. Education

Institutively, many urban gardeners develop the core skills of becoming educators. What... a gardener being a teacher? Wondering how?

Well, as you farm over plots, many people will find themselves seeking your advice on ways to garden and grow crops as you tend to know valuable information regarding their growing conditions, pests, fertilizers, etc. Before you know it, people are going to be reaching your garden so that they can ask you questions regarding their gardens. And soon enough, you are going to be no less than a pro!



A girl learning container gardening basics

4. The Rural to Urban connection

Being a gardener, I realized the crucial role of connecting rural and concrete farmers. Because let's face it, farming isn't a bed of roses. Some crops take too long to produce, require too much area, or are too expensive for an urban farmer to raise effectively. Farmers in rural regions, on the other hand, have access to acres and acres of land, as well as heavy machinery for managing crops, which may be more efficiently produced with a tractor. Access to markets is a huge concern for them, as it is for everyone else. Because they are located distant from major population areas, locating markets is more difficult for them than it would be for an urban farmer. So, what do we do?

To be honest, there is a huge need for implementing efficient collaboration here, which might provide an easier supply of food for the community and also represent a very positive role for urban farmers to play.