

URBAN AG 101

URBAN AGRICULTURE
AND ITS BENEFITS





WHAT IS URBAN AG?

"URBAN AG" IS SHORT FOR "URBAN AGRICULTURE," WHICH INCLUDES GROWING, PRODUCING, DISTRIBUTING, AND MARKETING FOOD IN URBAN AREAS.



URBAN AG CAN LOOK LIKE ANYTHING FROM BACKYARD CHICKEN-RAISING AND BEEKEEPING TO COMMUNITY GARDENS, TO SMALL-SCALE COMMERCIAL FARMING ON THE EDGES OF CITIES.

GROWING FOOD IS ACHIEVABLE IN UNEXPECTED PLACES:

PRIVATE SPACES

RESIDENCES, YARDS, ROOFTOPS, VERTICAL FARMS INSIDE BUILDINGS, FAMILY FARMS IN URBAN GREENBELTS

PUBLIC SPACES

PARKS, EDIBLE LANDSCAPES, CONSERVATION AREAS, ALONG ROADS, STREAMS AND RAILWAYS

SEMI-PUBLIC SPACES

SCHOOLYARDS, HOSPITALS, VACANT LOTS, COMMUNITY GARDENS



7 BENEFITS OF URBAN AG

HINT: IT'S NOT ALWAYS ABOUT THE FOOD!

1. BUILDS SOCIAL CAPITAL & GATHERS COMMUNITIES

COMMUNITY GARDENS ENHANCE SOCIAL CAPITAL BY INCREASING BONDS AND NETWORKS AMONG NEIGHBORS, AND AMONG PEOPLE FROM DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS.

THE PHYSICAL SPACES WHERE URBAN AGRICULTURE PROJECTS EXIST ALSO ENRICH COMMUNITY WELL-BEING. AS "THIRD SPACES" BEYOND THE HOME OR WORK, GARDENS FUNCTION AS GATHERING PLACES FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO INTERACT— ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT IN AREAS WHERE OPEN GREEN SPACES ARE RARE.

2. PROVIDES EDUCATION & SKILL DEVELOPMENT

BUILDING ON THEIR ROLE AS COMMUNITY HUBS, COMMUNITY GARDENS AND OTHER SITES OF URBAN AGRICULTURE ALSO SERVE AS SITES FOR EDUCATION, YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, AND SKILLS/ WORKFORCE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES.

WHETHER THROUGH FORMAL PROGRAMS OR INFORMAL EXCHANGES, THESE PLACES HELP TEACH YOUTH ABOUT SCIENCE, ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP, CULTURAL HERITAGE, AND HEALTHY EATING.



3. SUPPLEMENTS ACCESS TO FRESH FOOD

FEW, IF ANY, URBAN AGRICULTURE PROJECTS ARE INTENDED TO REPLACE TRADITIONAL FOOD RETAIL OR WOULD CLAIM TO LEAD TO FOOD SELF-SUFFICIENCY FOR INDIVIDUALS OR FOR CITIES.

HOWEVER, URBAN AG DOES SUPPLEMENT HOUSEHOLD, COMMUNITY AND MUNICIPAL FOOD SECURITY WITH SEASONAL AND CULTURALLY-APPROPRIATE FOODS. AND IF KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND LONG-TERM LAND TENURE ARE ADEQUATELY SUPPORTED, THEY MAY OFFER RESILIENCE IN THE FACE OF TEMPORARY FUTURE FOOD SHORTAGES.

4. CULTIVATES AGRICULTURAL LITERACY

BY RECONNECTING URBAN CONSUMERS TO FOOD PRODUCTION AND INTRODUCING THEM TO NEW FRUITS AND VEGETABLES, URBAN AGRICULTURE CAN HELP FOSTER AGRICULTURAL LITERACY AND A "DIFFERENT CONNECTION TO FOOD."

PEOPLE SHIFT FROM BEING PASSIVE CONSUMERS OF FOOD TO BECOMING CO-PRODUCERS, GAINING INCREASED CONTROL OVER HOW THEIR FOOD IS PRODUCED AND DISTRIBUTED.



5. CATALYZES CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

MANY SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SKILLS ARE GAINED THROUGH COMMUNITY GARDENING AND BUILDING AGRICULTURAL LITERACY, SUCH AS COMMUNITY ORGANIZING, FUNDRAISING, CONSENSUS BUILDING, AND DECISION MAKING. THESE CAN EMPOWER RESIDENTS TO BEGIN TACKLING OTHER ISSUES IN THEIR COMMUNITIES AND BEYOND.

6. PERFORMS ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

PLANTS AND TREES FACILITATE TEMPERATURE MODERATION, AND VEGETATION COLLECTS AND RETAINS PRECIPITATION, REDUCING STORM-WATER RUNOFF INTO URBAN WATERWAYS. GARDENS SUPPORT LOCAL BIODIVERSITY BY PROVIDING HABITATS AND FORAGE FOR POLLINATORS SUCH AS BEES.

7. SUPPORTS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

THE PRESENCE OF COMMUNITY GARDENS HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH INCREASED PROPERTY VALUES.

SPECIAL ATTENTION SHOULD BE PAID, HOWEVER, TO ENSURE THAT COMMUNITY RESIDENTS ARE GIVEN A VOICE IN DECISION-MAKING AROUND URBAN AGRICULTURE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ISSUES PERTAINING TO THEIR NEIGHBORHOODS.



SUPPORT THE MOVEMENT!



GET TO KNOW YOUR LOCAL URBAN GROWERS

FIND OUT WHAT COMMUNITY GARDENS AND URBAN GROWERS ARE LOCATED IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD. SCOUT THEM OUT AT YOUR LOCAL FARMER'S MARKET, ON THE INTERNET OR VIA WORD OF MOUTH. ASK THEM ABOUT WHAT THEY GROW AND THEIR FARMING PRACTICES!

EAT & BUY LOCAL FOOD

THE NEXT BEST THING TO DO IS TO BUY & EAT LOCALLY PRODUCED FOOD, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THE FARM IT GREW ON IS URBAN OR NOT. FEWER FOOD MILES MEANS MORE NUTRIENTS AND FLAVOR FOR YOU, MORE DOLLARS BACK IN THE LOCAL ECONOMY, AND A SMALLER IMPACT ON THE PLANET.

TRY GROWING YOUR OWN FOOD

TRY YOUR HAND AT STARTING YOUR OWN URBAN GARDEN OR SMALL OPERATION. SEEK OUT YOUR LOCAL GARDENING SOCIETY, BEEKEEPING CLUB OR URBAN AG TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GROUP FOR TIPS.

(IN SAN DIEGO & CHULA VISTA) LEARN ABOUT UAIZ

THE "URBAN AGRICULTURE INCENTIVE ZONE" (UAIZ) PROGRAM OFFERS A PROPERTY TAX INCENTIVE TO ENCOURAGE URBAN AG IN SAN DIEGO NEIGHBORHOODS. IF YOU'RE A LANDOWNER, CONSIDER LEASING YOUR PARCEL OF LAND TO AN URBAN AG PROJECT.