

**CHICAGO ADVOCATES
FOR
URBAN AGRICULTURE**

**Helpful
Resources
for Starting
an Urban
Farm**

April 29, 2006

Chicago Advocates for Urban Agriculture

Helpful Resources for Starting an Urban Farm

Getting Started

Check out and consult with existing urban farms and farmers in Chicago and in other cities.

- **City Farm:** City Farm is a sustainable organic farm bordering two very diverse Chicago neighborhoods: Cabrini Green and The Gold Coast. Resource Center, www.resourcecenterchicago.org, Clybourn and Division, Chris Anderson at (773)398-3451 cityfarm@resourcecenterchicago.org
- **CSA Learning Center:** empowers people to create sustainable communities through educational opportunities offered in partnership with Angelic Organics farms and other urban gardens. Chicago Office, www.csalearningcenter.org, Rasha Abdulhadi, rasha@csalearningcenter.org 773.288.5462
- **Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance:** The Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance strengthens community through the unique combination of the Garfield Park Conservatory Campus, other botanical resources, and the engagement of community members. www.garfieldconservatory.org, 300 North Central Park Ave. Chicago, Illinois 60624-1996 (773) 638-1766
- **Growing Home:** Growing Home is a non-profit enterprise serving homeless and low-income people through a transitional employment program in the organic farming business. www.growinghomeinc.org, Harry Rhodes, 312.435.8601, info@growinghomeinc.org
- **Growing Power:** Growing Power is a nationwide nonprofit organization and land trust supporting people from diverse backgrounds and the environments they live in through the development of Community Food Systems. These systems provide high-quality, safe, healthy, affordable food for all residents in the community. www.growingpower.org, Erika Allen, erika@growingpower.org, 414.527.1546
- **Sweet Beginnings/Bee Line:** An Urban Honey Transitional Jobs Initiative as a strategy for providing local employment for formerly incarcerated individuals and other low-income North Lawndale residents, and for promoting community economic development. www.nlen.org/sweet.html

Courses:

- **Building Urban Gardens (BUGs):** course on urban organic gardening and design, Openlands, <http://www.openlands.org>, 312.863.6270
- **Farm Beginnings:**
 - **Northern IL, Southern WI:** CSA Learning Center and Stateline CRAFT. www.csalearningcenter.org/farmbeginnings.html, Parker Forsell, craft@csalearningcenter.org , 815.389.8455
 - **Central and Southern IL:** The Land Connection and University of IL Extension, <http://www.farmbeginnings.uiuc.edu/> , Terra Brockman, terra@mtco.com, 309-965-2407 or 309-678-2672
- **CRAFT monthly field days:** on-farm trainings offered once a month April-October and coordinated through CSA Learning Center, Parker Forsell, craft@csalearningcenter.org 815.389.8455

- **University of Illinois Extension – Master Gardener Program:** Ron Wolford, 773-233-0476, rwolford@uiuc.edu <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/chicago/mg/index.html>
- **Workshops at Growing Power in Milwaukee:** Growing Power has extensive training facilities. These include seven large greenhouses, a kitchen, indoor & outdoor training gardens, aquaculture system and a food distribution facility. Animals at the facility include worms, fish, rabbits, bees, goats, chickens and ducks. www.growingpower.org, 414.527.1546

Marketing

- **Chicago’s Green City Market:** Their mission is to improve the availability of a diverse range of high quality foods, to connect local producers and farmers to chefs, restaurateurs, food organizations and the public, and, to support small family farms and promote a healthier society. www.chicagogreencitymarket.org
- **City of Chicago – Mayor’s Office of Special Events:** this office sponsors about 30 farmers markets scattered around Chicago. Ron Salazar and Yescenia Mota are responsible for farmers markets. (312) 744-3315
- **Farm Forager – Mari Coyne:** Chicago’s Green City Market and the Mayor’s Office of Special Events have hired a farm forager to improve the City’s farmers markets. 847.830.8948, farmforager@yahoo.com
- **Familyfarmed.org:** website, food label, and EXPO that supports Midwestern organic farmers by connecting them with consumers and commercial buyers. FamilyFarmed.org creates sustainable economic development, builds community, and contributes to a healthy environment by encouraging people to buy food from local producers. www.familyfarmed.org
- **HomeGrown Chicago:** Independent neighborhood farmer’s market featuring locally grown produce from neighborhood community gardens. Runs July 8, 2006 through November 4 at 2626 W. Division Street in Humboldt Park. Contact Miguel Morales or Anita Rico at the Puerto Rican Cultural Center – 773-278-6737
- **Illinois Farm Direct:** Farm Direct helps you find fresh, locally grown food by connecting you directly with Illinois farmers. There is a website and a booklet. www.illinoisfarmdirect.org
- **Local Harvest:** Maintains a national directory of small farms, farmers markets, and other local and sustainable food sources. www.localharvest.org
- **Restaurants:** See chefs and restaurants listed on Chicago’s Green City Market’s website. www.chicagogreencitymarket.org. These chefs purchase produce directly from local and sustainable farms.

Technical Assistance

- **Alderman:** Neighborhood city council members can be allies in securing and retaining green space and urban agriculture plots in Chicago. Call 311 to find your alderman’s contact information.
- **CSA Learning Center,** Chicago Office, see above for contact information.
- **Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance,** see above for contact information
- **GreenNet** – A coalition of committed to serving as a clearinghouse for information about greening in Chicago and to developing joint efforts to improve the quality, amount, use, and wide geographic distribution of sustainable, green open space in the City of Chicago. Maintains a calendar of events www.greennetchicago.org
- **Growing Power,** Chicago and Milwaukee, see above for contact information

- **Neighborspace** – Offers assistance to urban gardens in securing urban land and liability coverage, and preserving urban green space. www.neighbor-space.org
- Chicago Food Policy Advisory Council
- **Openlands**: is dedicated to preserving and enhancing public open space in northeastern Illinois. Urban greening programs include BUGs, Green Teacher Network, GardenKeepers (community garden volunteer support network), and TreeKeepers. Provides information and materials on how to start community garden projects. www.openlands.org
- **Resource Center** – compost is available for purchase from the Resource Center. For more information, call (773)821-1351
- **Sources for soil testing:**
 - **A&L Great Lakes Lab**, 3505 Conestoga Dr, Fort Wayne, IN 46808. 260.483.4739
 - **STAT Chicago Technology Park, 2255 W. Harrison St. , Chicago, IL 60612** 312/733-0551, FAX: 312/733-2386 STATinfo@STATAnalysis.com www.STATAnalysis.com
- **North Lawndale Greening Committee** – Velma Johnson, President. Gardening and Community Gardening as well as urban farming organizations in Chicago’s NL neighborhood
- **Lake Street Supply Co.** 1810 W Lake Street Chicago, IL 60612 312-226-0760 Leaf or Mushroom Compost \$ 26 Garden Mix Soil \$ 34 Delivery fee \$60
- **Chicago Department of Real Estate** - 312/744-LAND – for information on landownership in Chicago

Helpful Publications & Organizations

- **Growing for Market** – “journal of news and ideas for market gardeners” www.growingformarket.com
- **Conscious Choice** - “*Conscious Choice* serves as a resource to help readers live healthier lives and create a sustainable society — and have fun doing it. Our editorial content builds community; promotes social, political, and environmental awareness; and supports wellness through natural foods, nutrition, and integrative health care” www.consciouschoice.com
- **Slow Food Chicago** – “Recognizing that the enjoyment of wholesome food is essential to the pursuit of happiness, [Slow Food U.S.A.](http://SlowFoodU.S.A.) is an educational organization dedicated to stewardship of the land and ecologically sound food production; to the revival of the kitchen and the table as centers of pleasure, culture, and community; to the invigoration and proliferation of regional, seasonal culinary traditions; and to living a slower and more harmonious rhythm of life:” www.slowfoodchicago.org
- **ATTRA – National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service** - “Looking for the latest in sustainable agriculture and organic farming news, events and funding opportunities? We feature all that, plus in-depth publications on production practices, alternative crop and livestock enterprises, innovative marketing, organic certification, and highlights of local, regional, USDA and other federal sustainable ag activities:” www.attra.org
- **Heifer International** – “Heifer envisions a world of communities living together in peace and equitably sharing the resources of a healthy planet. Heifer’s mission is to work with communities to end hunger and poverty and to care for the earth. Heifer’s

Midwest office works with several Chicago area organizations that are providing urban agriculture training.” www.heifer.org (773) 279-9696

- **Community Food Security Coalition** – “A North American organization dedicated to building strong, sustainable, local and regional food systems that ensure access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food for all people at all times. CFSC has a very active urban agriculture committee that prepared an urban agriculture primer, which is available on-line.” www.foodsecurity.org
- **Organic Consumers Association** - “An online and grassroots non-profit public interest organization campaigning for health, justice, and sustainability.” www.organicconsumers.org
- **CRAFT (Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training)**– A coalition of growers working to train the next generation of organic, Biodynamic, and sustainable agriculture farmers for the northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin region. www.cslearningcenter.org/craft.html
- **Agroecology/Sustainable Agriculture Program at University of Illinois** - Facilitates and promotes research and education which protects Illinois' natural and human resources while sustaining agricultural production forever. www.aces.uiuc.edu/asap/
- **Michael Fields Agricultural Institute** - Our mission is to cultivate the ecological, social, economic, and spiritual vitality of food and farming systems through education, research, policy and market development. www.michaelfieldsagainst.org
- **The Land Connection** - The Land Connection is working to create a food system that is truly sustainable -- one that enables farmers to make a living without handouts, one that connects food producers and consumers in a direct way, one that preserves and enhances the quality of the soil, air, and water on which all life depend. www.thelandconnection.org
- **Chicago Botanic Garden** – Located in Glencoe, has 23 gardens and three native habitat areas on 385 acres. The Fruit & Vegetable Garden showcases an abundance of ideas for culinary gardening, and demonstrates urban gardening techniques. www.chicagobotanic.org
- **Believe Chicago** - Chicago's sustainability hub, this website provides information on events and resources in the Chicago metropolitan area. www.believechicago.org
- **Seven Generations Ahead** - The mission of Seven Generations Ahead (SGA) is to build communities that care for the environment, meet the basic human needs of all citizens, and provide safe and healthy lives for our children and future generations. www.sevengenerationsahead.org
- **Organic Food Network** – www.organicfoodnetwork.net
- **Illinois Stewardship Alliance** – A citizen’s organization that promotes a safe and nutritious food system, family farming, and healthy communities by advocating diverse, humane, and socially just and ecologically sustainable production and marketing practices. www.illinoisstewardshipalliance.org
- **MOSES – Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service** - An education-outreach organization working to promote sustainable and organic agriculture. Sponsors the annual Upper Midwest Organic Farming Conference. www.mosesorganic.org

Advocates for Urban Agriculture

Plan for Sustainable Urban Agriculture in Chicago

April 27, 2006

Advocates for Urban Agriculture (AUA) is a coalition of organizations and individuals open to all interested in networking and advocating for urban agriculture in the Chicago area. Urban Agriculture is the growing, processing, and distributing of food and other products through plant cultivation and small-scale animal husbandry in and around cities.

Urban Agriculture Rationale

With a strong, integrated plan for urban agriculture, the City of Chicago could reap the broadest community, economic, nutritional and environmental benefits. Such a plan would help Mayor Daley and Chicago residents realize a vision for Chicago as the “greenest city in the world.”

Urban Agriculture Improves the Environment and Enhances Quality of Life by:

- Turning unused vacant lots into attractive, safe urban farms.
- Improving storm water collection.
- Increasing biodiversity.
- Reducing air pollution.
- Composting the 30% of the waste stream that is organic waste.
- Cleaning up the 70% of Chicago soil that is contaminated.
- Reducing fuel consumption by not transporting agricultural products long distances.
- Reducing urban cooling energy requirements as a result of adding plants to the environment.

Urban Agriculture Brings About Community Economic Development By:

- Providing employment and supplemental income opportunities.
- Increasing overall economic activity in local communities.
- Increasing green open space and the property values and tax revenues near them.
- Allowing residents to save money growing and/or buying locally.
- Reducing the costs of health care through the health and environmental benefits of gardening and eating fresh produce.

Urban Agriculture Enhances Food Security By:

- Increasing the availability of healthy, affordable food for all.
- Teaching people how to grow their own food.
- Reducing the reliance on emergency food systems.
- Increasing residents' income and access to local food.

Urban Agriculture is a Proven Benefit to Urban Areas:

- 40% of Toronto, Canada, residents grow some of their food in home or community gardens.
- Residents in Havana Cuba, produced 8500 tons of agricultural produce including 7.5 million eggs and 3,650 tons of meat in 1996 alone.
- The United Nations Development Program estimates that 15-20% of food is produced in urban areas world-wide.
- Salem, Oregon, reports that urban land next to a “greenbelt” was worth \$1,200.00 more per acre than land only 1000 feet away.

Advocates for Urban Agriculture Urban Agriculture Models

Home Gardens

Home gardens are usually smaller than a city lot and adjacent to a house or apartment. They are managed by residents and production is primarily for home use. Small scale income generation from produce or value-added products is possible.

Community-Based Gardens

Community-based gardens range in size from a portion of a city lot to several lots. They are located at schools, churches, community centers, food pantries, housing developments, or on other city or community-owned land. They are managed by constituents of the community entity, and production is for use by constituents, by the organization, or for income generation.

Commercial Gardens and Small Farms

Commercial gardens and small farms range in size from one city lot to 10 acres. They are usually located in vacant lots in commercial or residential areas either owned or leased by the producer. Management is often by an entrepreneur or employee of a restaurant, and production is primarily for income generation.

Advocates for Urban Agriculture Policy Recommendations

Land Use

Goal: Make land available for urban farming in the Chicago metropolitan area.

Recommendations:

1. Insure low-moderate income neighborhood residents have priority for receiving support.
2. Establish an urban agriculture incubator area in which a large tract of city land allows new farmers to gain experience.
3. Develop tenure schemes including land trusts and long term leases.
4. Create urban agriculture zoning with land identified in neighborhoods for food cultivation and small-scale animal husbandry.

5. Establish tax incentives and discounted sale of city land for urban agriculture.
6. Coordinate and expand assistance with water access for urban agriculture.

Soil and Compost

Goal: Create an adequate supply of clean, safe, affordable soil, compost and other amendments for urban farming. Recommendations:

1. Establish city-wide source-separated commercial, restaurant and residential collection of organic materials for compost production.
2. Use tax incentives and/or discounted sale or lease of land for commercial or community composting enterprises.
3. Assistance with soil testing, remediation and soil removal and replacement.
4. Establish home composting bin distribution and education program.

Training and Education

Goal: Support existing urban farmers and train new urban farmers in organic practices and enterprise development. Recommendations:

1. Establish training centers partially funded by the city that include incubator growing plots for entrepreneurs
2. Support school programs that grow food and teach land stewardship and healthy eating habits while supporting city and state learning standards.
3. Foster apprenticeship programs on local farms.
4. Encourage and expand urban agriculture in summer youth and other employment programs.

Marketing and Distribution

Goal: Insure local, sustainably-grown produce is available and affordable throughout Chicago, especially in low income communities. Recommendations:

1. Improve food stamp service at farmer's markets.
2. Provide grants, subsidies, support or other incentives for urban farmers who sell below market rate in low income communities.
3. Establish preferences for purchase of locally produced food by city agencies.
4. Establish year 'round green markets and strengthened farmer's market program, with community input in farmer's market policies.
5. Encourage a network of certified kitchens for use by growers for processing of value-added products.
6. Foster public awareness campaigns that promote locally grown food and local food production.

Advocates for Urban Agriculture *Who We Are*

Advocates for Urban Agriculture (AUA) is a coalition of organizations and individuals, primarily in Chicago, creating a plan calling for changes in City policies that will create the greatest opportunities for successful urban agriculture projects. The current structure consists of an interim steering committee, and quarterly meetings open to all organizations and individuals involved in greening, urban planning, development and agriculture. Many people have come to the quarterly meetings seeking information and

the power that comes from the unity of purpose - seeking changes in policy and access to land and resources to make their projects work.

Steering Committee Advocates

The Steering Committee is open to all participants, but the following organizations and individuals have committed to doing extra work to move AUA forward. This work includes drafting the "Plan For Urban Agriculture" for presentation to the City, and exploring forms and adoption of AUA organizational structure. (Following is a list of the original steering committee members as of 2003)

Chicago Park District	Adam Schwerner adamschwerner@chicagoparkdistrict.com
CSA Learning Center at Angelic Organics	Amelia Baxter amelia@gofairtrade.net
Englewood Community Garden Coord.	Fredricka Lightfoot (773) 483-9688
Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance	Carl Grimm cgrimm@garfieldpark.org
LISC New Communities Program	Gwen O'Connor-Griffin ggriffin@garfieldpark.org
Growing Home	Harry Rhodes hrhodes@growinghomeinc.org
Heifer International	Rodger Cooley rodger.cooley@heifer.org
Independent Landscaper/Grower	Nance Klehm nettlesting@yahoo.com
NeighborSpace, Executive Director	Mary Jo Schnell mjschnell@neighbor-space.org
Openlands, HomeGrown Chicago	Julie Samuels jsamuels@openlands.org
Resource Center	Ken Dunn (773) 758-1351
U of I Extension	Rhonda Hardy rihardy@uiuc.edu

Other Advocates

Chicago Botanic Garden	Rory Klick
Chicago Master Gardener	Ruth Melulis
Chicago Master Gardener	Ruth Ruback
Chicago Permaculture Group	Rael Basan
Chicago Waldorf School	Patircian Holdrege
Department of Cultural Affairs, Chicago	Barbara Koenen
Frontera Grill/Market Gardener	Denise Handwerker
Frontera Grill/Urban Grower	Sarah Steedman
Gallery 37 Culinary Coordinator	Jennifer Manning
Grower/Master Gardener	Sydney Barton
Growing Home, Inc.	Vivian Cruz
Growing Home, Inc.	Larry O'Toole
Growing Power	Will Allen
Growing Power, Chicago	Erika Allen
Growing Power, Chicago	Nicole Jain Capizzi
HomeGrown Chicago/Independent Grower	Heather Sewell
HomeGrown Chicago/Independent Grower	Michael Thompson
Institute for Community Resource Development	LaDonna Redmond
Lawndale Greening Committee, HomeGrown Chicago, Grower	Velma Johnson
Master Gardener	Harmony Piccinea
Sustain, Local Organic Initiative	Michael Holdrege
U of I Extension Chicago Fresh	Lynette Mensah
United Blocks of West Humboldt Park, HomeGrown Chicago, Grower	Lydia Molina