

Sustainable Path - Idea Club - Topic Sustainable Urban Farming – 8/24/09

20 people in attendance

People farming for themselves vs. a co-op of neighborhood.

The challenge of trying to have year round crops or urban livestock.

Issues for Urban Farming:

- Soil contaminants (even with lead contaminant - tree and cane fruit is okay)
- Education/Culture - Do people in urban areas know how to farm?
- Aggregated urban micro farms

Local/Regional Resources Mentioned:

Seattle-King Count Acting Food Policy Council -

<http://king.wsu.edu/foodandfarms/foodpolicycouncil.htm> - THEY ARE CURRENTLY WORKING ON "Formation of the new **Good Food Network** focused on food system issues in the greater Seattle area will begin **September 2009**. To learn more about this effort contact: [Branden Born](#) 206-543-4975" -- The Council also has a listserv.

City Fruit - <http://cityfruit.org/> - "City-grown fruit is a resource for the entire community."

Puget Sound Fresh - <http://www.pugetsoundfresh.org/> - "Working to open a large market for local farmers to serve better produce for Puget Sound residents."

P-Patch Community Gardens - <http://www.cityofseattle.net/neighborhoods/ppatch/> - There are 68 of these community gardens in Seattle.

Urban Garden Share - <http://www.urbangardenshare.org/> - "Matching homeowners (with garden space) to gardeners (with experience) is the perfect solution for cultivating both food production and community."

MRSC's Community Garden Resource list - <http://www.mrsc.org/Subjects/Parks/comgarden.aspx> - This site has a lot of information linked from it.

King County Master Gardener program Demonstration Garden in Bellevue -

<http://www.mgfk.org/locations/bellevue/> - located at 15500 SE 16th St, Bellevue – has community education center and community garden.

Cascade Land Conservancy - <http://www.cascadeagenda.com/>

SAGE – Sustainable Agriculture Education - <http://www.sagecenter.org/> - “linking food farms and future”

Seattle Urban Farm Company - <http://www.seattleurbanfarmco.com/welcome.html>

Cascadian Edible Landscapes - <http://www.eatyouryard.com/>

Seattle Farm Worker Coop - <http://urbancsas.wordpress.com/> - they have a listserv

Edible Seattle - <http://www.ediblecommunities.com/seattle/>

Urban Land Army - <http://www.urbanlandarmy.com/> - “Join forces, grow food, get skills. Repeat.”

YouTube Video – Lawn Gone – done by Sustainable North East Seattle -

School Gardens Discussion:

- A few schools doing a few things. Through the USDA there are some funds for schools to have gardens.
- The New School at South Shore in the Rainer Beach neighborhood will have a school garden.
- Challenges for school gardens include: school year doesn't correspond with the garden year, funding, maintenance, land.
- Advocacy work is being done with local school groups through the Puget Sound School Garden Collective - <http://www.pugetsoundschoolgardens.org/> .
- Each school really needs a champion in order for a school garden to be successful.

Other resources for youth gardening:

- King County extension has a 4H program - <http://king.wsu.edu/4H/index.htm>
- Seattle Youth Garden Works - www.sygw.org

General Discussion Points:

- We need to instill the values of community gardens and educate kids
- King County is going to close parks to save money. What will happen to the unused land?
- Rezoning in Woodinville - disrupting farm land
- Havana & Milwaukee are great examples of sustainable urban farming in action
- An Idaho land developer put in community gardens in the development because people are willing to pay more for housing near gardens

- Food for Everyone - Spring 2009 issue of Yes! Magazine
- Differences between suburban & urban farming
- Vocational training – for people that have the desire to farm
- What is the best way for people to start?
- What do people value that is keeping them from starting an urban garden?
- Some people are slave to their gardens
- Need to create an economy for people to be able to sustain themselves for gardening /urban lawns.
- Don't approach urban farming from a city scale, rather focus on smaller communities. Do it on small scale.
- The way the economy is going – every body is really interested in talking about raising/growing their own food.
- Cedar Grove is the best composting - it creates an economy
- Building community is great – but change happens when the economy is changing
- Wouldn't it be exciting if a mayoral candidate took gardening on as a platform issue/
- Temple of dining culture – people are wanting better foods – and people want fresh food.
- People are becoming aware of fresh food.
- What are the values that are keeping people from connecting to other people to share land and food?
- With peak oil – the strengths of neighborhoods will be really important.
- Tool lending library
- Distribution is really a important part of urban farming - it is the difference between farming and gardening
- Why aren't there food garden clubs?
- Public libraries could be a great resource for demonstration gardens and tool lending
- Vertical farming - Op Ed in 8/24 New York times – a farm on every floor – hydroponics
- Buildings are more marketable when they have green/garden space.

- Don't send students to other countries when they want to learn about farming, try to find a way for them to learn/act locally.–
- How sustainable is looking at urban agriculture- is it really feasible to for urban farms to support all the food needs of a city?
- We need to focus on 100 mile radius – currently just 2% of food dollars is for food in the 100 mile boundary.
- The typical person can't cultivate food to feed their families. Times will change things – in Europe, they have realized that they have to grow produce locally.