

CATEGORY: LANDSCAPES FOR HEALTH – DESIGNED LANDSCAPES

Community Gardens

Community gardens are defined as a “single piece of land gardened collectively by a group of people using shared or collective plots on private and public land” in urban or rural settings (Connect our Future, n.d.). The diversity of community gardens is their strength; the American Community Garden Association links more than 2000 gardens in North America. Community gardens encompass a broad spectrum of goals, activities, people and garden installations including school gardens, environmental stewardship, food action, food councils, sustainable communities strategies, soil and water conservation, social engagement, and horticultural therapy. Recent research has investigated plant and insect health at community gardens (Felderhoff et al., 2023; Sebald et al., 2023), human resiliency (Huq, et al., 2025; Kairos, et al., 2025) and environmental health impacts (Dwelley, 2025; Khanpoor-Siahdarka et al., 2025).

A newer model of community gardens are those affiliated with hospitals, as delivery sites for nutrition-focused educational/lifestyle/health programming aimed at individual and community health improvements. Part of a movement referred to as “Food is Medicine”, with an increasing number of these types of community gardens, some at hospital locations, some in the community, represent the intersection of healthcare and horticulture.

Recent research focuses have been on group gardening with Indigenous peoples (Brown et al., 2020; Emmanuel et al., 2023; Cueva et al., 2020; Ornelas et al., 2021), community gardening impacts on specific health metrics like stress (Coringrato et al. 2024), and interventions for specific populations - community gardening interventions for non-communicable diseases among Indigenous populations (Emmanuel et al., 2023), migrant and refugees (Polanco, 2020; Ramburn et al., 2023), vulnerable populations (Dyg et al., 2020; Tracey et al., 2023), cancer survivors (Gregis et al., 2021), and seniors with food insecurity (Tims et al., 2021).

For related resources refer to category: Plant-based Food, Plant-based Nutrition and Food security Initiatives – all sections; category: Landscapes for Health – Community Gardens, Urban Farms.; category Populations & Programs - Food Insecure populations

Key Organizations

[The American Community Garden Association](#) (ACGA)

[The Coalition of Community Gardens](#) (Florida)

[Edible South Florida](#)

[Social Farms & Gardens \(UK\)](#)

[Health Care Without Harm](#)

[Social Farms & Gardens \(UK\)](#)

[Urban Land Institute](#)

Books, journals & epublications on community gardens

AARP. (2023). [Creating community gardens for people of all ages: A toolkit for neighbors and local leaders](#). AARP.org.

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- Public Health Law Center (2017). [Community gardening: Policy reference guide | Public Health Law Center](#).
- Valle, GR. (2022). *Gardening at the margins: Convivial labor, community, and resistance*. University of Arizona Press.

Research & articles on community gardens

Recently published selected research & articles:

- AB Newswire. (2026, March 16). [Houston veteran and healthcare professional proposes \\$1 million worth & wellness initiative to combat food deserts and strengthen community health | Press Releases. mykxlg.com](#).
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- Carrad, A., Rose, N., Charlton, K., & Reeve, B. (2024). [Local governments as gatekeepers to community gardens: What does “support” mean?](#) *Local Environment*, 29(7).
- Chauvenet, C., Sheppard, B., Siddique, N. et al. (2021). [A qualitative study of rural low-wealth participants’ experiences with community gardens.](#) *J Hunger Environ Nutr.*
- Cline, MR. (2025). [The effect of a hospital community garden on healthcare workers’ professional quality of life.](#) Doctoral dissertation: University of Kentucky.
- Coringrato, E., Alaimo, K., Leiferman, JA. et al. (2024). [A process evaluation of a randomized-controlled trial of community gardening to improve health behaviors and reduce stress and anxiety.](#) *Scientific Reports*, 14(1).
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- Derkzen, M. (2021). [Healthy urban communities: How does involvement in green citizen initiatives benefit people’s health and well-being?](#) *ISHS Acta Horticulturae 1330: XV International People Plant Symposium and II International Symposium on Horticultural Therapies: The Role of Horticulture in Human Well-being and Social Development .*
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Examples of community gardens

Active Orlando community gardens. [Community Gardens - City of Orlando](#)

American Community Garden Association website shares resources and gardens of the month as success stories and inspiration. [Eden Garden, Joliet Ill.](#) is one such example where church, children and food literacy and access have thrived.

Beacon Food Forest in Seattle Washington is open to the public to forage on the 7-acre plot adjacent to a local park.

<https://beaconfoodforest.org/>

Community Gardens website from edible South Florida lists community gardens.

<https://ediblesouthflorida.ediblecommunities.com/things-do/community-gardens>

Denver Urban Gardens (DUG) increases access, skills and resources to grow food locally as sustainable green spaces while providing resources, community garden directory, and programs.

<https://dug.org/>

Five Points Farm/Community Garden, Atlanta is part of the AGLanta Grows-A-Lot program, is built on a repurposed abandoned parking lot, using a rooftop irrigation system for its pollinator garden and food production urban farm.

<https://www.aglanta.org/aglanta-calendar/2022/5/22/five-points-farm-five-points-marta-community-garden-aglanta-grows-a-lot>

Gainesville Giving Garden in Gainesville, FL is committed to “Bridging the gap between low-income families and fresh, organic produce by growing and distributing food to those in need.”

<https://www.gainesvillegivinggarden.org/>

[“Garden of Hope” helps cancer survivors reconnect with food](#) at Ohio State University’s Comprehensive Cancer Center - The James.

Green Haven Project in Overtown, FL is a non-profit organization that creates community gardens in food deserts and provides locally grown food free to community residents. They also provide educational workshops on horticulture and nutrition for youth.

<https://www.greenhavenproject.org/>

Grow2Heal operates 5 community gardens within Baptist Health Hospitals in South Florida: Homestead Hospital, West Kendall Baptist Hospital, South Miami, Doctor’s Hospital, and Baptist Hospital in collaboration with Miami Cancer Institute.

<https://baptisthealth.net/about-baptist-health/sustainability>

Henry Ford Hospital West Bloomington greenhouse combines food production and wellness.

<https://www.greenhousemag.com/news/henry-ford-hospital-greenhouse/>

Lemon Tree Trust supports community gardens in refugee camps, including *Azadi Community Garden* and *Hevi Community Garden* in Kurdistan and *Ridgecrest Community Garden*, Vickery Meadows in Dallas, TX.

<https://lemontreetrust.org/community-gardens/>

Needham Community Farm MA provides hands-on education and growing space for sustainable growing, community connections and food donations for food insecure community members.

https://www.needhamfarm.org/?gclid=CjwKCAjw5dggBhBNEiwA7PryaAAZuMTYsXqOhOgn6FagQlvRaOeWwWpqDy7-3HitoVf4b4c6r-KhYRoCelQQAvD_BwE

Our Saviour Community Garden in Dallas, TX is an Episcopal church ministry that grows greens for the neighboring food pantry and educates the community on sustainable, organic gardening practices.

<https://oursaviourcommunitygarden.org/>

Prinzessinnengarten urban farm and community project in Berlin Germany, beside the former Berlin Wall, in unused space in the city, is growing vegetables in easy to move containers (recycled tetra pacs, rise sacks, plastic crates).

<https://www.visitberlin.de/en/prinzessinnengarten>

The Healthy Earth Organization supports community gardens in Southwest Florida, including those at Lee County health care facilities, with volunteers and programming.

<http://TheHealthyEarth.org>

ThriveAbility Garden in Naples, FL. is a collaboration between the *City of Naples*, *River Park Community Center*, and *StarAbility Foundation*, teaching life skills to individuals with developmental disabilities within a community garden setting.

<https://starability.org/garden/>

United States Botanic Garden, in conjunction with the *American Public Gardens Association* have awarded funds to 26 public gardens and their community partners engaging in urban agriculture, food-growing and related education work in 2024. The *Urban Agriculture Resilience Program*, begun in 2020 has awarded \$1.57 million dollars.

<https://www.publicgardens.org/funds-awarded-to-26-urban-agriculture-projects-led-by-public-gardens-and-community-partners/>

Whitelock Community Farm in Baltimore, Maryland promotes gardening, composting and community activity.

<http://whitelockfarm.org/>

Videos, webinars & websites on community gardens

Agrihoods, a new approach to master-planned neighborhoods and interest in community farms is profiled in *Forbes* magazine article in Serenbe GA, Grayslake Ill, and Palm Beach Fl.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/allyale/2019/09/12/meet-the-farm-based-neighborhoods-changing-the-face-of-master-planned-communities/?sh=61c700f63baa>

Baptist Health. (2020, February 12). *Grow2Heal: Serving Healthy Options*. [Video].

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1FeN7-1LHd8>

City Farmer News provides articles and videos on community gardens like [Health: Community Garden Storytelling Project](#) [Video] and “How community gardens contribute to health and inclusive neighborhoods” article.

<https://cityfarmer.info/how-community-gardens-contribute-to-healthy-and-inclusive-neighbourhoods/>

Community Agriculture: Concepts, Models, and Impacts website by Utah State University provides background information.

<https://extension.usu.edu/sustainability/research/community-agriculture-concepts-models-impacts>

Florida Department of State. [Community Gardens & Spaces - Division of Library and Information Services - Florida Department of State](#) provides community garden toolkits and grant information.

Food Action is Happening in People-Plant Programming webinar [video] by Lesley Fleming, HTR and Donna Perez Lugones (2023) identify projects and organizations addressing food access and food security.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ORSrtP1qBhU&t=4s>

Guides for Community Gardening (digital and hardcopy) are identified on the Boston Public Library site. <https://guides.bpl.org/communitygardening>

Greenroofs.com. (2019, March 4). [Boston Medical Center's rooftop farm](#) [video]. YouTube.

Harlem Grown community gardens seek to inspire youth to lead healthy ambitious lives through hands-on education available at this organization's site in downtown NY.

<https://www.harlemgrown.org/>

Healthcare without Harm. (2018). Examples of hospital roles and participation [in community farms].

<https://foodcommunitybenefit.noharm.org/resources/implementation-strategy/program-community-gardens-and-farms>

Hunter College New York City Food Policy Center, (2020) identifies 15 urban farms bringing fresh produce and food education to New Yorkers (Brooklyn Grange, The Battery Urban Farm, Eagle Street Rooftop Farms, East New York Farms...).

<https://www.nycfoodpolicy.org/15-urban-farms-and-gardens-bringing-fresh-produce-and-food-education-to-new-yorkers/>

NC Collard Greens and Common Ground resources from NC State Extension provides information and guides in English & Spanish. <https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/collard-greens-and-common-ground-a-north-carolina-community-food-gardening-handbook>

Need to Know Developments in Horticultural Therapy and Horticulture for Health webinar [video] by Lesley Fleming, HTR (2023) includes nutrition and food literacy with projects addressing food/nutrition access. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ORSrtP1qBhU&t=4s>

North Carolina Community Garden Partners is a volunteer-based grassroots non-profit that hosts a website connecting people, gardens and resources for growing food, building communities and cultivating justice.

<https://www.nccgp.org/>

Nourish Nova Scotia has free online resources including [Goal-Setting Worksheet for School Gardens](#) and [Goal-Setting Worksheets for Community Organizations](#).

Nutrition Garden Rx webinar [video] by Deidre Schuetz and Kenneth Powell-Wilson (2025) shares how garden-based initiatives can address food insecurity.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xBNp3Lr1e0M>

Public Health Law Center offers a webinar [video] (2017): [Get Ready for Spring! Supporting the Success of Local Community Gardens through Local Laws and Policies | Public Health Law Center](#).

Stein Leaning Gardens at Saint Sabina website discusses benefits of community gardens including helping the environment, sustainable development goals, improved lifestyle and return to traditions, increased real estate values and food action for food insecurity.

<https://www.sabinagardens.org/the-many-benefits-of-community-gardens>

THAD database includes therapeutic horticulture activities specifically for participants at community gardens (activities like [kitchen waste: regrow avocado seeds](#), [freezing herbs](#), [newcomer plots gardening at hospital grounds](#), [planting & building a pallet garden](#), [field trip to community garden](#), [growing garlic](#), [herb propagation by cutting & seeds](#)).

<https://hos.ifas.ufl.edu/therapeutic-horticulture-activities-database/>

The BIPOC Community Garden (2020) – Connecting Food and People through Gardening (Ithica, NY). [Video]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hALWsAm2FjY>

Tulane University identifies public health benefits of community gardens, best crops, with other resources helpful for community gardens.

<https://publichealth.tulane.edu/blog/benefits-of-community-gardens/>

University of Illinois Extension Horticulture (2019) Community Garden Webinar Series of 14 videos. [Video]. <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLYzGf5DsOPcB8dxrmgvyokplrCvG1iw8y>

Urban Harvest.org in Houston, Tx shares a video on starting a community or school garden, and information on its 160 affiliated gardens, all focused on creating thriving communities with access to fresh food and sustainable greenspaces.

<https://www.urbanharvest.org/gardens/>

WorkingFood.org in North Central Florida has a mission to “cultivate a resilient local food community” in the region, offering training, education, and a network of gardens and farms.

<https://workingfood.org/who-we-are>

Related organizations

[Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program \(CFPCGP\) | NIFA](#)

[Jardins Comunitarios de Orland FL.](#) (in Spanish)

[Land Trust Alliance](#)

Local Master Gardener & Extension offices

[SSSA Home | Soil Science Society of America](#)

[Waterloo Region Community Garden Network](#), Canada

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