

## URBAN AGRICULTURE

### We dream about having a soil to cultivate....

The most of the staff and learners of The Mosaic live in North London where all the time they can see soil that could be used for urban agriculture. Actually, in many areas of many cities there is soil that can be made useful to produce what we need for living and this can also provide jobs for unemployed young people.



Urban farming is about groups of people who start growing their garden on soil made available by the Councils or private landlords.



There is a great satisfaction in observing the growth of vegetables we plant and take care of.

The growth of community gardening and food-growing projects in the city can be seen as something of a resistance movement: part of a struggle to maintain our contact with the soil and to meet the need of “the sight of sky and of things growing” that Octavia Hill, founder of the National Trust, thought “common to all men”.



The London Borough of Islington invested £1 million in Edible Islington, a scheme to promote food-growing projects in parks, schools and estates. The London Mayor's Capital Growth project now reports just under 1,300 such sites, with the aim of reaching 2,012 within one year.

As Bob Gilbert, Chair of The Garden Classroom, Islington, London wrote, where there is no soil to start with on sites completely hard-surfaced, some of the approaches have demonstrated considerable imagination. Whole gardens have been created in containers, in raised beds and even in rows of soil-filled 'grab bags'. On one temporary site in Shoreditch, racks of shelves were constructed and lined with 200 terracotta pots, all lovingly tended by local residents.

But it is not just the availability of open land that is disappearing: so are the skills, the experience, even the culture of cultivating it – a culture that was once prevalent even in areas of the most tightly packed rows of terraced housing, where runner beans were grown and a few chickens kept in even the smallest backyard. Today, by contrast, in our London gardens we have paved over an area twice the size of Hyde Park.



We therefore need projects like "The Garden Classroom", which currently operates out of the King Henry's Walk Garden in Islington, and which aims to help develop new growing sites and to provide the skills – and the encouragement – to run them. The project helps schools and estates to set up their growing projects and, just as crucially,

provides in-service training for teachers, and holiday activity schemes such as its Grassroots programme for children.

In pursuing the aim of giving inner-city people the opportunities for a hands-on experience both of growing things and of the natural environment, The Garden Classroom also seeks to make use of every available element of the urban environment, such as street trees or tiny scraps of secondary woodland for forestry projects, or using the local canal for environmental science lessons on a floating classroom.

It has to be admitted that all these are relatively small stirrings at a time when the government is intending to use increased house building to stimulate economic growth and to weaken planning controls on new development. But they are all the more important for that. And what they

represent is a deep and vital connectivity with the earth, and a reassertion of that connection for those from whom it has been ‘stolen’.



“Cultivate London” is an urban farm and social enterprise based across multiple derelict sites in West London. It's a social enterprise set up to get unemployed youth working in horticulture in the South West of the city. There are nearly 900,000 16-24 year olds out of work in the UK and this is just one of many schemes to guide them in to employment. Cultivate London covers around 1500 square metres over three sites, but turns out around 30,000 heads of lettuce to local suppliers, as well as herbs, vegetables and flowers.

Here you can hear an interview on BBC:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b045xvtw>

Their website: <http://cultivatelondon.org/>

On their website we read that Cultivate London has three main objectives:

- To generate training opportunities and jobs for unemployed young people aged 16-24 in practical horticulture
- To convert derelict and vacant land across London into productive food growing space
- To increase the amount of local and organically grown produce consumed by Londoners.

They aim to have a long term impact on the lives of young people and change the way Londoners think about their fresh produce and where it comes from. In recognition of their efforts, they recently received the Observer Food Monthly’s “Producer of the Year” award, and feature in a number of documentaries on urban farming, including the film “Best Before: the London Food Revolution” and book “Farming in the City”.

Very interesting is the work of “GrowUP”. GrowUp co-founder Kate Hofman was selected as London Leader 2014 by LSDC (London Sustainable Development Commission).



GrowUp  
Urban  
Farms is

committed to feeding people in cities in a way that is positive for communities and the environment, today and in the future.

They produce sustainable fresh fish, salads and herbs in cities using a combination of aquaponic and vertical growing technologies.

They lower the environmental impact of agriculture by building and operating farms that take unused urban space and use it to grow produce. Through the use of aquaponic technology and protected cropping, they can produce a year-round harvest of fresh, leafy vegetables and fish.

They're changing the way food is grown and distributed in cities and they're reconnecting people with the story of food from farm to the table.

Here is a video with an interview with Kate:

<http://www.growup.org.uk/photos-and-videos/videos/>

A conference took place in Nottingham recently: International Conference on Vertical Farming and Urban Agriculture 9th – 10th September 2014 - The University Of Nottingham, UK

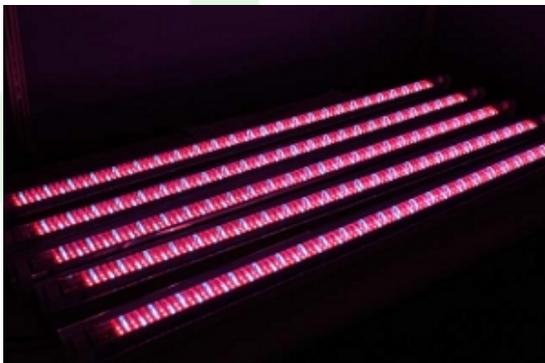
<http://vfua.org/>



Hydro-garden  
September 2008  
Dr Chungui Lu



Sadie Alsop, Samantha  
Barclay, David Brook  
(FloodPlainTower) High-Rise Architecture Studio,  
University of Nottingham



LED lighting systems – September 2011 – Hortifair  
& Philips

The Centre for Urban Agriculture at the University of Nottingham recently organised an International Conference on Vertical Farming and Urban Agriculture. This event brought together scientists, engineers, industrialists and policymakers to discuss current ideas, technologies, commercial applications and research opportunities in Vertical Farming and Urban Agriculture. It evaluated the benefits, opportunities, risks and challenges of vertical farming / urban agriculture and provided a forum for establishing research collaboration and networking between academic researchers and commercial interests.

Why is vertical farming / urban agriculture important?

The continually-growing world populations, the global trend to urbanisation, climate change and pressure on natural resources are key drivers for policies on global food security. How can we feed more people on limited agricultural land, with limited resources? How can we best utilise space, light and logistics for an increasingly urban population? What can zero waste and low energy technologies contribute to food production in an urban environment? There is an urgent need to identify and develop innovative methods for sustainable food production. Vertical farming and urban agriculture, if designed and implemented appropriately, could offer sustainable and innovative solutions for improving food security.