

Welcome to USDA's People's Garden

The simple act of planting a garden can have big impacts -- from building a more diversified and resilient local food system to empowering communities to address issues like nutrition access and climate change.

Starting at USDA's National Headquarters in Washington, D.C. and expanding to our 17 urban hubs across the nation and beyond, USDA's People's Gardens will engage the community to:



The most valuable of all arts will be the art of deriving a comfortable subsistence from the smallest area of soil.

— Abraham Lincoln



The Name Explained

The People's Garden was named in honor of USDA's founder, President Abraham Lincoln, who described USDA as "The People's Department." The first People's Garden at USDA headquarters was started by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack on February 12, 2009 – Lincoln's 200th birthday.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

April 2022



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

WELCOME TO



Grow fresh, healthy food and support a resilient, local food system.



Teach people how to garden using sustainable practices.



Nurture habitat for pollinators and wildlife, and greenspace for neighbors to gather and enjoy.



What is a People's Garden?

People's Gardens empower communities to participate in local food production and provide diversity and resiliency to the food supply chain. They also teach about the benefits of sustainable, local agriculture and how gardening can foster community collaboration, provide green gathering spaces, and benefit the environment.

People's Gardens are different sizes and types based on the needs of the community. School gardens, community gardens, urban farms, and small-scale agriculture projects in rural and urban areas can be recognized as a "People's Garden" if they:



Benefit the community by providing food, beautification, wildlife habitat, education site, etc.



Are a collaborative effort. This can include groups working together with USDA agencies, food banks, Girl Scouts, Master Gardeners, conservation districts, etc.



“ I encourage you to participate and be involved. Real and effective action starts small and it starts with our communities. ”
— *Agriculture Secretary* **Tom Vilsack**



Incorporate sustainable practices, such as using native plant species, rain barrels, integrated pest management, xeriscaping.



Educate the public about sustainable gardening practices and the importance of local, diverse sources of healthy food.



Types of People's Gardens

People's Gardens can take many different forms:



FOOD GARDENS

Grow healthy, fresh fruits and vegetables in your own community. Don't forget to donate any excess food to a local food pantry.



WILDLIFE HABITAT AND SUSTAINABLE GARDENING

Provide food, water, cover and a place for wildlife to raise their young. Increase the number of pollinators in your area by including plants that provide essential habitat for bees, bats, butterflies, moths, beetles, hummingbirds, and other pollinators. Demonstrate the value of conserving soil, water, air, and other natural resources.



BEAUTIFICATION

Plant a green, beautiful place for your community to gather, enjoy and reflect. Rethink the planting of seasonal annuals and instead design a space with native species of flowering plants to enhance the biodiversity of your community and build a healthier ecosystem.



EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Many gardens align garden activities to lessons and subjects being taught in the classroom. Gardens can also be used to offer job training and apprenticeships in forestry, agriculture, landscaping, and culinary arts to those experiencing barriers to employment so they can find and keep a good job.

Learn more about the People's Garden at www.usda.gov/Peoples-Garden and USDA assistance for urban farms and gardens at www.farmers.gov/urban.