

Urban Gardening Initiatives 2022

Edmonton

Joining many other Canadian municipalities, the City of Edmonton proclaimed 2022 the Year of the Garden! There has been a tremendous growth in gardening interest, as well as many opportunities to learn about gardening and how to grow food. More and more, people are connecting to nature, wellness and to each other, while beautifying their communities and growing food. In celebration of the Year of the Garden, we invite you to learn all the ways urban gardening is growing in Edmonton!

fresh: EDMONTON'S FOOD AND AGRICULTURE STRATEGY

fresh was developed in consultation with interested residents, groups, businesses and organizations. Implementation has been underway since 2012, when it was approved by City Council. The strategy helps guide Edmonton towards the vision of a resilient food and agriculture system that contributes to the local economy and the overall cultural, financial, social and environmental sustainability of the city.



The Edmonton Food Council

Edmonton Food Council welcomed some new members in 2022, and transitioned back to in-person monthly meetings. A strategic review of priorities in fall of 2022 led to the identification of three primary areas of focus for the Food Council over the next year: urban agriculture, food security and equity; and informing relevant City policy and program development related to the fresh strategy.

Front Yards in Bloom: Edible Yards

Front Yards In Bloom is a volunteer based, partnership program that has been in operation since 1999, encouraging Edmontonians to recognize their neighbours' outdoor beautification efforts. The program has an Edible Yards category which celebrates growing vegetables in front yards. In 2022 there were 61 nominations for the Edible Yard, which accounted for 1.5% of all nominations! The Edible Yards category is the second fastest growing, just behind the Tiny Yard category.

City Farms

The City Farms project was introduced in the summer of 2020 to help Edmontonians access food. Existing land was repurposed for agricultural production and since 2020, City Farms has produced 142,458 lbs of food for Edmonton's Food Bank.

Pop-Up Community Gardens

This pilot project was created in 2020 to provide increased gardening opportunities and access to freshly grown food during the pandemic. Pop-Up Community Gardens are temporary growing spaces available to community groups through an application process. In 2022, 350 planters were provided to 26 participating sites.





I loved going each day to my pop-up garden, mentally it served me well. Not only was I able to bring home fresh home grown produce, the nurturing and caring of the plants I find pleasure in too. Additional exercise daily too and fresh air is a great benefit.

Participant survey respondent



Community Gardens

With over 80 sites on public and private land, Community Gardens are flourishing in Edmonton. Each season new gardens are planned, built and operated by community for community. To support vibrant gardens, the City of Edmonton partners with Sustainable Food Edmonton to provide Community Garden Grants. In 2022, these grants were awarded to nine community gardens.

Urban Hens & Urban Honeybees

In 2022, the City issued 30 Urban Hen Licences and 16 Urban Bee Keeping Licenses. To support urban bees, the City offers four options for beekeeping courses that are geared towards giving small scale and backyard beekeepers the skills and knowledge to successfully manage honeybee colonies. In 2022, BeeComm's community beekeeping certificate was added.

Boulevard Gardening

Boulevard Gardening is a type of urban gardening that involves the use of space between the sidewalk and the street to create a garden. In 2022, the program was launched with 200 approved garden applications. This gardening option has gained popularity, as it provides a way to enhance the beauty and sustainability of our urban streets.

What we are working on in 2023

- ✦ As City Farms enters its fourth year, opportunities to expand are being explored, including options for new locations, as well as expanding educational program and volunteer opportunities. In 2022, City Farms produced 56,077 lbs of food for Edmonton's Food Bank.
- ✦ After running three successful pilot seasons, the Pop-Up Community Gardens project became a fully funded program. This change brings additional resources and a predictable environment that will improve how the program is delivered to the community.
- ✦ As part of a plan to decrease maintenance costs for turf management and meet the goals of the Fresh strategy, the Urban Farms project will look at the feasibility of developing a program or process for converting underutilized land for larger urban farm projects. Initial work to determine the feasibility of the project, as well as engagement with stakeholders, will begin in 2023.
- ✦ A review and possible update of the Fresh strategy is being planned for 2023.
- ✦ Guidelines for Commercial Beekeepers will be finalized in the spring to address increased inquiries from commercial beekeepers to utilize non-residential land and buildings as bee hive locations.



For more information visit edmonton.ca

Edmonton