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September 22, 2015

Urban Eco-Restoration Series

Part 3: A Farm in Your Urban Backyard



One of several community gardens in Portland, OR. Photo via Seedstock

If you are like many city dwellers, the idea of simply stepping outside of your house to gather food for your family seems to be nothing more than a charming, unrealistic dream. Instead, you roam the farmers market with great appreciation for the farmers who seem relentlessly dedicated to growing organic, healthy food. But maybe you also feel a twinge of envy for those who are self-sufficient with regards to their food. You long to feed yourself and your family with fresh, organic ingredients sourced directly from your own soil.

Featured Event

Tufts Fall 2015 Climate Conference: Restoring Water Cycles to Reverse Global Warming



Backyard raised beds. Photo via The Garden Glove

If you live in an apartment or condo complex, maybe you have a porch or balcony, access to the rooftop, or a nearby community garden. If you do, you will discover a myriad of ways to grow your own food. But plenty of us urbanites actually have greenspace with ample garden potential that we have neglected. In many metropolitan areas, including Boston, Los Angeles, and Seattle, houses have yards (garden space!) right in the city. If you happen to live in such a house, congratulations! You can reap many of the rewards of farm life in your urban existence.

Here are some ideas on how to get started.

Create Your Compost

As we've mentioned in [previous newsletters](#), the foundation to any carbon-sequestering, fertile garden starts with nutrient-dense soil. Increase the organic soil carbon of your garden and you'll be growing plants richer in both micronutrients and taste. Choose the method of composting that best fits your garden aspirations and style.



Work of the Edible Urban Farm Company in Palo Alto, CA. Photo via Smart Gardener Backyard

Vegetable & Herb Beds

Once you've set up a foundation of nutrient-rich soil, you are ready to choose the types of plants you wish to grow. This is the time to decide on your highest gardening priorities: Would you like to create straight-from-the-garden salads each night? Do you want an abundance of herbs? Are you one of those incredible people who can eat zucchini for days on end? Think about plant varieties that are [native to your climate](#) and try to incorporate [companion planting](#). You can also explore



In this conference we will focus on water's role in regulating climate through its capacity to store, move and transfer more heat than any other natural compound.

Sponsored by the Tufts Institute of the Environment.

RSVP

When

Friday, October 16, 2015, 5:30 PM - Sunday, October 18, 2015 5:00 PM (EDT).

Where

Tufts University, Medford, MA.

Fees

\$15-\$150 sliding scale

For more information [visit here](#) and [register now on Eventbrite!](#)

Other Events

Restoring Ecosystems to Reverse Global Warming

September 26, 2015,
10a.m.-5p.m.

Moot Court Room, David A. Clarke School of Law, University of the District of Columbia. Washington D.C.

Sponsored by Moral Action on Climate, People Demanding

[integrated pest management](#) and promote a biodiverse ecosystem in your yard.



Pollinator friendly garden. Photo via [permaculture.org](#)

Pollinator-friendly Habitat

Given the dire problems facing honeybee populations, it's important to think about these vital pollinators when creating your urban oasis. As you plan your garden, focus on native plants and varieties that have overlapping flowering periods to lengthen the season when bees can collect nectar and pollen. Learn more about tips to encourage a thriving pollinator population [here](#).



Chicken cabinet coop designed by Ton Matton. Photo via [Inhabitat](#)

Chicken Coop

Who doesn't gasp with delight at the idea of regularly eating fresh, vibrantly yellow-yolked eggs? It is certainly a commitment to house chickens in your backyard, but doing so can be fun, entertaining and incredibly tasty! And while [building your own coop](#) scores you major cool points, you may just want to buy an affordable, beautiful coop already [designed and ready](#) for your feathered friends. Like most animals you would care for, chickens come with a [detailed list of instructions](#) and require a fair amount of attention. If you are considering bringing home some chicks, visit your local farmers market to get tips from a professional. The [internet](#) also has plenty of information on chicken keeping.

Action, and the University of the District of Columbia Law School.

Find out more information [here](#) and [register now on Eventbrite!](#)

For up-to-date info on our events

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Did you know...

- Properly managed water cycles can cool the earth's lands while we reduce greenhouse gas levels in the atmosphere
- The largest terrestrial carbon sink on Planet Earth is soils
- Soils hold more carbon than the atmosphere and all plant and animal life combined
- Human mismanagement has caused more carbon to be lost to the atmosphere from soils than is currently up there today, causing an excessive and dangerous greenhouse effect
- We know how to pull all excess carbon out of the atmosphere through eco-restoration, using nature's own unique invention

Whatever your urban living situation, you can find a way to incorporate a sweet slice of farm life into your current existence. So give it a go!

Climate Conference Speaker Announcement



Rajendra Singh during a Water Walk for Peace in Stockholm. Photo via The Guardian

We are very excited to share that Rajendra Singh, the "Water Man of India," will be speaking at our Restoring Water Cycles to Reverse Global Warming Conference!

Rajendra Singh is a water conservationist who is praised internationally for his work with community-driven efforts in water harvesting and management. Through his efforts with communities he has helped bring water to more than 1,200 villages. Singh is beginning a five-year expedition of walking across five continents-[World Water Peace Walks](#)-as part of his campaign to raise awareness for human water rights. He won the Stockholm Water Prize in 2015.

Learn more about Rajendra Singh and our other incredible conference speakers [here](#)!

that's 3.4 billion years old, photosynthesis

- We can return to pre-industrial atmospheric carbon levels in a few decades or less, and cool the biosphere even faster than that
- Eco-restoration brings extraordinary benefits aside from addressing climate change: increased food production, sustainable local economies; elimination of toxic fossil-fuel based soil inputs; reduced regional conflicts (food and water wars); significant mitigation of drought, floods and violent weather; and climate and environmental justice
- It is very low- to no-tech
- All of this, in the global economy, returns far more than it costs: the entire world, humans and non-humans alike, makes a "profit"!
- When we restore water cycles, a natural process during eco-restoration, we cool the surface of the earth and reduce or prevent many adverse effects of excess heat-trapping greenhouse gases

The mainstream climate conversation still has not embraced the power of nature to heal what humans have wrought. And yet, nature is poised for us to play a positive role among life on earth.

To learn more about the extraordinary healing capacity of nature, sign up now to attend our Fall 2015 Climate Conference, [Restoring Water Cycles to Reverse Global Warming](#).

About BLC

Our mission at Biodiversity for a Livable Climate is to mobilize the biosphere to restore ecosystems and reverse climate change. Our primary project is to re-direct the mainstream climate conversation from an almost exclusive concern with atmospheric carbon to encompass the entire carbon and water cycles and the regenerative role of biology.

Learn more about our ongoing projects, upcoming events and find additional information and resources at bio4climate.org.