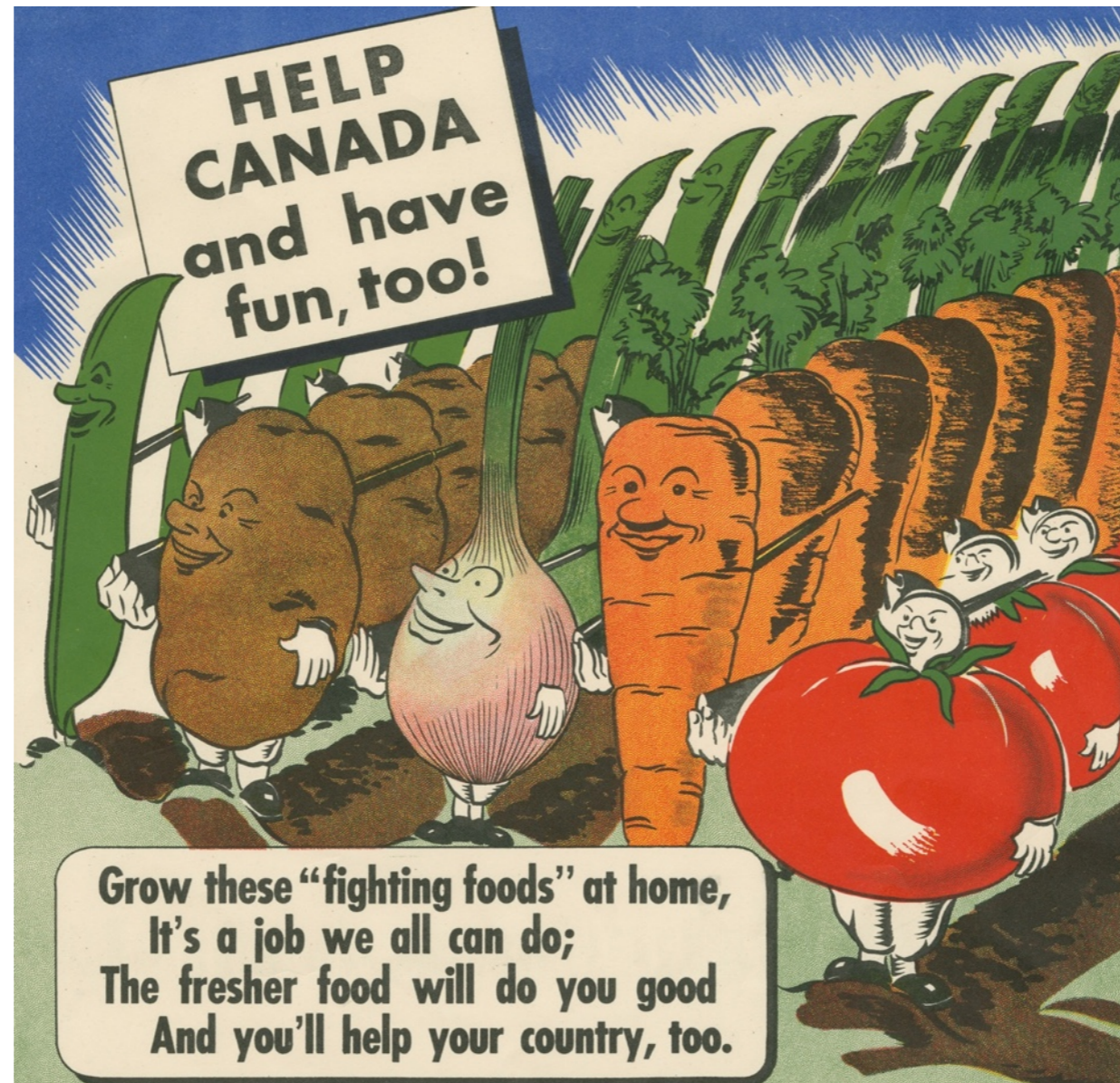


# Canada: A National Strategy for Urban Agriculture



ABOVE: CANADIAN VICTORY GARDEN POSTER – WORLD WAR II



# ‘Sunny Days’ in the Food Garden

**For the health of all Canadians**

To provide people with garden fresh food

To improve the environment

To lift our spirits

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# Canada: A National Strategy for Urban Agriculture

## Why promote urban agriculture?

### To better the health of Canadians

Urban farming provides freshly picked vegetables, fruits, herbs, and eggs for better nutrition

Provides exercise and reduces stress

Builds a positive attitude

### To make us aware of our environment

Urban farming can teach us about

Climate change

Pollution of air, water, and soil

Building habitat for insects and birds

And where our food comes from

### To strengthen our communities

Urban farming brings people together

Beautifies our cities

## Who are we targeting?

Over 26 million Canadians live in 147 metropolitan areas and agglomerations across the country with populations that range from 5,600,000 people in Toronto to 10,500 in Bay Roberts, Newfoundland.

Urban residents can produce a tremendous amount of food at home on their private property. Those who live in multi-family homes have the opportunity to garden on balconies, rooftops, community allotments, school gardens, etc. The majority of city farmers in Canada will consume the food they grow and not sell it.

There are also urban farmers who grow and sell their food. These people grow on vacant lots, large rooftop hydroponic enterprises and small urban farms within municipal boundaries.

## **How will the Federal Government encourage urban farming?**

The Government will take a leadership role and validate urban agriculture.

### **Actions:**

#### **1. Set up a Federal Office of Urban Agriculture**

Staff will coordinate a national effort and provide data such as statistics on the number of people involved, amount of land available, and total produce grown.

#### **2. Convene a Roundtable of Canadian Experts**

Experts from across the country will provide the government with strategies to move urban agriculture forward. Many Canadians have years of experience in a variety of roles in this field.

#### **3. Set Up a Model Food Garden on Parliament Hill**

The garden will highlight the Government's commitment to food gardens.

#### **4. Set Up Demonstration Gardens in Canada's largest Cities**

The demonstration gardens will provide educational hubs for many thousands of people within large municipalities. Staff at the gardens will teach residents how to produce food using local resources and expertise.

#### **5. Convene a National Conference on Urban Agriculture**

The Federal Office of Urban Agriculture will invite Canadians to a national networking event. Food growers from home, school, rooftop and community gardens, as well as commercial urban farmers will learn from each other.

#### **6. Publish a National Urban Agriculture Website**

The website will provide resources for city farmers across the country. Publications, educational courses, sources of seeds, local municipal policies, and lists of community and school gardens are a few examples.



## **7. Co-ordinate Urban Agriculture Policies**

The Federal Office will review policies for city food production, such as those related to beekeeping, chickens, the selling of produce, and tax breaks.

## **8. Fund Urban Agriculture Projects**

There are many new urban agriculture technologies in development such as phone apps that show where produce can be purchased, websites that locate vacant urban land, and aquaponic systems for producing fish. Incentive funding will encourage entrepreneurs to continue their work .

## **9. Facilitate Urban – Rural Farmer Connections**

By connecting urban and rural farmers, we can help urban residents better understand our Canadian agriculture and food system.

## **10. Facilitate Canadian – International Urban Agriculture Connections**

Canadians can share our urban agriculture strategies with countries around the world and at the same time learn from them.

## **Canada – A Leader in Urban Agriculture**

Urban agriculture has been practiced in Canada since the first settlers arrived in French Canada and grew ‘potagers’ (kitchen gardens).

**Victory Gardens.** “During the Second World War the Canadian Government urged city people to grow food at home to help with the War effort. At its 1944 peak, it was estimated that upwards of 209,200 Victory Gardens were in operation nationwide producing a total of 57,000 tonnes of vegetables.”

**Canada’s International Development Research Centre (IDRC)** has played a leading role in forging urban agriculture and raising awareness of it throughout the world. IDRC’s efforts are highlighted by its ambitious ‘Cities Feeding People’ research initiative carried out from 1996 to 2005.

**City Farmer Society**, a non-profit organization in Vancouver, has been continuously researching and promoting urban agriculture for almost 40 years.

In 1980 City Farmer sent literature about urban agriculture to Members of Parliament and received positive feedback.

*Monique Begin, Minister of National Health and Welfare  
1980*

“Your reference to the benefits of urban farming such as individual food production and the educational and healthful aspects of raising your own crops has considerable merit. My Department shares this commitment to the development of improved lifestyle activities that will emphasize the responsibility of the individual to exercise greater control over personal well being and the environment.”

*Marc Lalonde, Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources Canada  
1980*

“The potential use of renewable energy sources by urban agriculture enthusiasts is well featured in the sample publications you sent me and I appreciate your thoughtfulness in bringing them to my attention.”

*John Fraser, Minister Environment Canada 1980*

“We are all distressed, I believe, to see prime agricultural land being lost to city development. Your novel way of tackling the problem is a very positive approach, one that can be immediately productive. Getting involved at the ‘grass roots’ level is a sure way for people to develop a personal awareness.”

*Eugene F. Whelan, Minister of Agriculture Canada 1980*

“If I have any regret about my present occupation it is that it does not allow me nearly as much time as I would like to spend ‘down on the farm’. However, somewhat as a substitute is the delight I derive from seeing our urban populace cultivating their backyard plots and allotment gardens, and the harvest that comes from their efforts. I wish you the best of success in promoting urban agriculture.”

*Edward C. Lumley, Minister of State for Trade 1980*

“From my own observation, I would say that the orientation of your organization is both timely and well directed. For example, here in Ottawa, a program of allotment gardens has been offered by the National Capital Commission (N.C.C.) for a number of years with great success. A number of municipalities throughout Canada, building on the N.C.C.'s experience, are now offering similar programs. I agree that the benefits to be derived from home production of food are numerous. Cer-



tainly, if such production can offset food imports from California and elsewhere, so much the better.”

### *City Farmer News –Online*

In 1994, City Farmer published the first website devoted to sharing urban agriculture research. By 2012 the site was receiving over one million page-views a year and was read by people all over the world. It continues to publish news about urban agriculture seven days a week. [[www.cityfarmer.info](http://www.cityfarmer.info)]

# Examples of Urban Agriculture Across Canada

From coast to coast to coast  
Canadians are growing food in cities.  
Stories about their successes are  
featured in the news every day.

Encouragement, a space to garden,  
support from governments and  
funders, and education are all that  
people need to become urban  
farmers.



## **Parliament Buildings**

### **Quebec City – Les Potagers de l'Assemblée Nationale**

“Composés de 5 sections thématiques, ils comptent 130 variétés plantées sur près de 2000 pi<sup>2</sup>, autant en pleine terre qu’en Smart Pots. Deux ruches ont aussi pris place sur le toit de l’Assemblée. À découvrir en images et dès maintenant sur place.”



## Food Bank

**Saskatoon** – “The Garden Patch is a community-driven urban agriculture initiative of the Saskatoon Food Bank and Learning Centre and is located in the 900 block of 3rd Ave. N in the heart of Saskatoon.

“Each year this vacant city-owned lot is transformed into a thriving green garden! In the last four years over 75,000 lbs of produce have been produced.”



## University Rooftop

**Toronto** – Ryerson University. “The Edible Rooftop Garden was developed by converting the existing green roof into an



edible roof through the addition of compost, sheet mulch and various seedlings from Ryerson’s greenhouse.

Currently, the Rooftop Garden flourishes with eggplants, hot peppers, squashes, basil, tomatoes and various types of let-tuces. In 2015 the garden produced 8,000 pounds of vegetables and fruits.”



## Front Yard Garden

**Drummondville, Quebec** – Homeowners contravene city bylaw. “The city has sent the couple two letters, asking them to reduce the size of their garden. It's given the couple until Sunday to comply. After that, they could be slapped with fines of between \$100 and \$300 per day.”



The couple said they will not give up without a fight. “It must be a right to be able to grow our vegetables on our land. It is nonsense to ban it,” said Beauchamp.



## Community Greenhouse

**Inuvik** – “The most northerly greenhouse in North America”

“Begun in 1999, the greenhouse holds 174 full-size plots. Each full plot is approximately 8 ft. by 4 ft. The rental fee per full plot is \$50 per plot.

“Members are able to grow anything they like, and with the 24-hour sunlight, anything is possible! Greens such as spinach, chard, and lettuce grow very well, and many members get multiple crops each year. Tomatoes, carrots, peas, herbs, strawberries, rhubarb, zucchini, and squash are among the common crops.”





## Backyard Garden

### Vancouver –

Throughout Vancouver’s history, most homes have had food producing backyards. New immigrants brought their farming knowledge with them and put it to good use on small plots of urban land.



## Commercial Rooftop Farm

**Montreal** – Lufa Farms. “In 2011, the company constructed the first commercial rooftop greenhouse in the world, a 32,000-square-foot facility atop a building in the Montreal neighbourhood of Ahuntsic, where it cultivates greens such as Boston lettuce and swiss chard, as well as cucumbers and peppers. Two years later, Lufa Farms added a 43,000-square-foot rooftop greenhouse in Laval, Que., where it grows mostly tomatoes.



“Victoria Shinkaruk, Lufa Farms' marketing co-ordinator, says the company now produces more than 200 metric tonnes of produce per year and its goal is to feed people who are in the city.”



## Refugee Garden

**Halifax** – “Immigrant Settlement and Integration Services is helping seed the fourth garden in four years. The Mosaic Ministries, an independent church on Willett Street in Halifax, donated the land in Fairview.

“Many of the gardeners are from the South Asian country Bhutan, a Buddhist nation where prosperity is measured by the happiness of its people. The Bhutanese were the driving force behind the first garden on city land next to a bus stop.”



## Allotment Garden

**Burnaby** – Started by the BC Government in the 1970’s, the Burnaby and Region Allotment Gardens grow healthy vegetables, berries and flowers on fourteen acres (5.9 hectare) of



farmland in south Burnaby, British Columbia. There are 372 garden plots. Each plot is 1000 sq ft (93 sq m) with plots measuring 50ft by 20ft.



## Hotel Food Garden

**Banff, Jasper, Whistler, Vancouver, Victoria, Toronto, Quebec, Montreal** – Ten Fairmont Hotel’s and Resorts grow fresh herbs and vegetables that are used by their restaurants’ chefs.



The Fairmont Chateau Whistler’s herb garden grows 46 varieties of herbs and other plants, including chervil, curry plant, perilla, and edible flowers such as nasturtiums, lemon gem marigolds and calendula.

## Chickens in the City

**Across the country** – “You can legally keep chickens in your yard in Vancouver, Victoria, Kelowna, Surrey, Montreal, Gatineau, Moncton and Whitehorse, but Toronto, Ottawa, Calgary, Halifax, Winnipeg, Regina and Saskatoon all ban the practice.



“Edmonton currently has a pilot project in place until August 2015 that allows a certain number of homes to keep chickens, and smaller Alberta cities, such as Grand Prairie, Airdrie, Peace River and Fort Saskatchewan allow them, as do the Ontario cities of Guelph, Waterloo, Brampton, Quinte West and Niagara Falls.”



## Parking Lot Urban Farm

**Vancouver** – “Sole Food now includes a network of farms throughout the city that are providing meaningful employment to 25 individuals who are dealing with drug addiction and mental illness.



“The farms are supplying fresh food to city residents, and presenting a successful credible model of high quality innovative agriculture within the urban context.”

## Urban Agriculture Municipal Policy

**Hamilton** – *Urban Agriculture Policy, Planning, and Practice. A Report for the City of Hamilton, Ontario*



Edible Landscaping in front of Hamilton City Hall.

“Planning: Add language to the Official Plan that expresses Hamilton’s long-term commitment to supporting the urban agriculture activities of its citizenry. This action should be undertaken in concert with Zoning By-law changes that will consider and account for the impacts of implementation.”



## School Market Garden

“**Fresh Roots (Vancouver)**, School Grown (Toronto), Roots to Harvest (Thunder Bay), and the Edible Garden Project (North Vancouver), are the four organizations in Canada that have large-scale schoolyard market gardens.

“The food grown at Fresh Roots goes into school cafeterias, local neighbourhood house food security initiatives, and a weekly Salad Box program for East Vancouver families.”



## Demonstration Garden

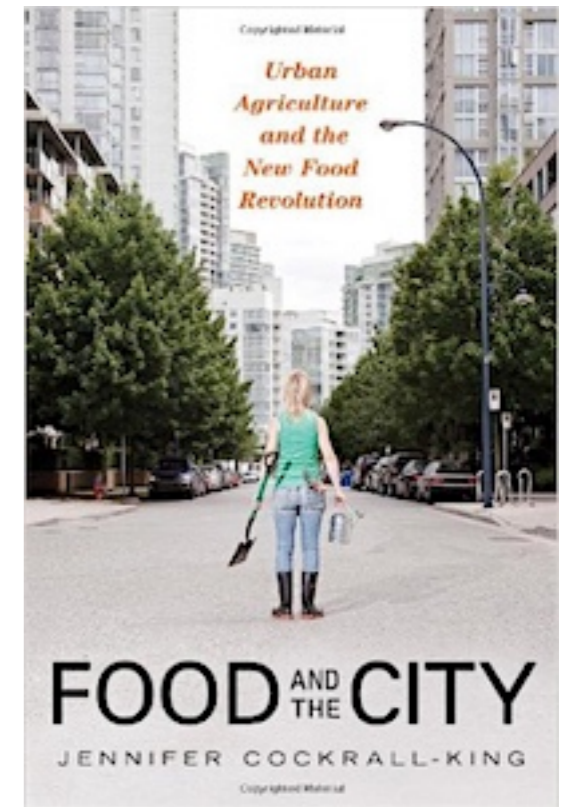
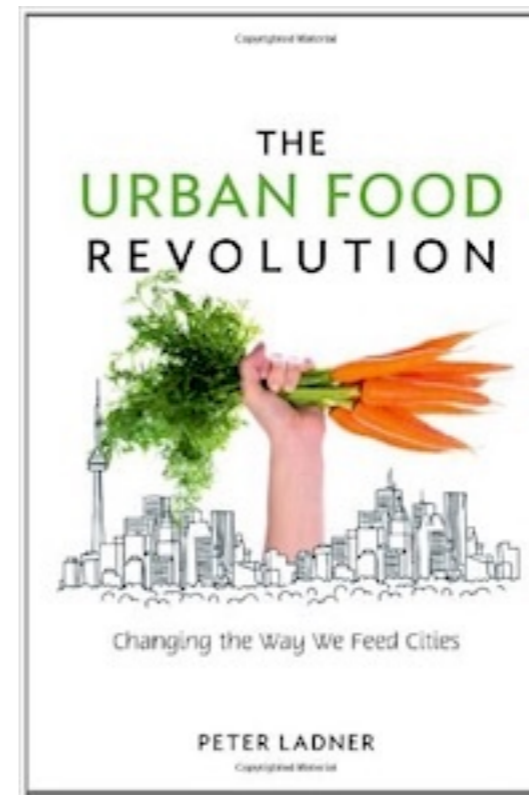
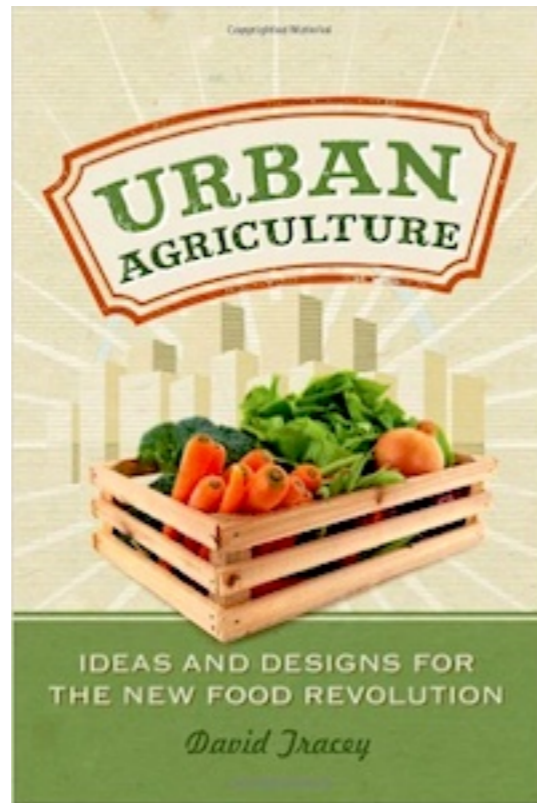
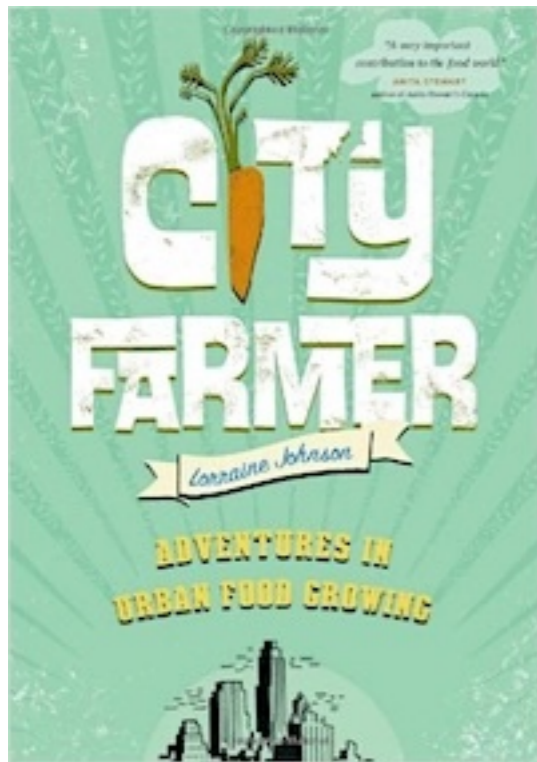
**The Vancouver Demonstration Garden**, run by City Farmer and the City of Vancouver, reaches over 2 million residents living in Metro Vancouver.



Started in 1981, It features composting systems, intensive food growing plots, climate adaptation/bio-diversity gardens, and an outdoor classroom. Staff conduct tours 6 days a week.



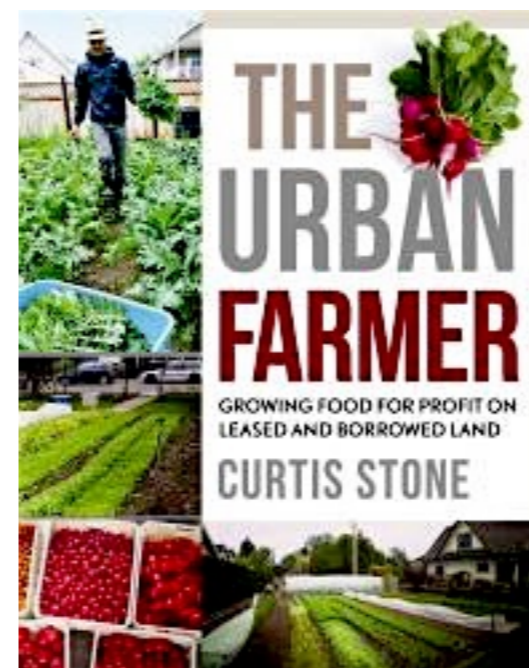
**Canadian Authors: “Urban Agriculture”**



*City Farmer – Adventures in Urban Food Growing by Corrairie Johnson*

*Urban Agriculture: Ideas and Designs for the New Food Revolution by David Tracey*

*Carrot City: Creating Places for Urban Agriculture by Mark Gorgolewski, June Komisar, and Joe Nasr*



*The Urban Food Revolution – Changing the Way We Feed Cities by Peter Ladner*

*Food and the City: Urban Agriculture and the New Food Revolution by Jennifer Cockrall-King*

*The Urban Farmer: Growing Food for Profit on Leased and Borrowed Land By Curtis Stone*