

Urban Agriculture in Gainesville: Summary of the purpose and impacts of a City of Gainesville Urban Agriculture Ordinance

What is Urban Agriculture?

Urban Agriculture is the production, distribution, and sales of food within urban and suburban areas for noncommercial/hobby, commercial, educational, or nonprofit purposes. These activities include:

- Food producing gardens (community, backyard, school, institutional, market, or rooftop);
- Edible landscaping;
- Bee, poultry, and animal keeping;
- Farmers' markets or mobile produce trucks;
- Urban or market farms; and
- Innovative food-production methods, such as hydroponics, aquaponics, and aquaculture.

What are the benefits of Urban Agriculture?

Economic benefits:

- Creating a sustainable and vibrant local economy.
- Urban Agriculture can bring in tax revenue and provides opportunities for employment, education, and entrepreneurship.

Health Benefits:

- Urban Agriculture can increase access to fresh produce and nutritionally rich foods in low-income neighborhoods with limited availability of nutritious food.
- Farming and gardening can be used for recreation and exercise.

Community Benefits:

- Allowing families and individuals without land of their own the opportunity to produce food.
- Focal point for community organizing that may lead to community-based efforts to address other social concerns.
- Opportunities to establish community relationships, to host social and cultural events, and to strengthen local communities.
- Gives citizens control over where their food comes from.

Education:

- Community gardens can serve as an outdoor classroom where youth can learn valuable skills, like those involving practical math, communication, responsibility and cooperation, as well as providing the opportunity to learn about the importance of community, stewardship and environmental responsibility.
- Community farms and gardens add beauty to the community and heighten people's awareness and appreciation for living things.

Why create an Urban Agriculture Ordinance in Gainesville?

Land Use Policy governs how land can be used within a given city or region. By adding Urban Agriculture to our policies, we allow our citizens and businesses to effectively advocate for urban agriculture projects and investment, and ensure that efforts, such as community and educational gardens and urban farms, are protected. While some urban agriculture activities are already occurring within the city limits, they are not officially covered by the city's zoning, so they are difficult to implement and regulate. Having an ordinance in place will allow the city to protect and effectively handle requests for permission to engage in urban agriculture activities and to respond to new innovations and practices that are not currently covered by the city's regulations.