



Planting the Seeds: How 5 Local Urban Farms Began

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Thanks to the growth of urban farms, more people than ever have access to local, healthy food across Philadelphia.

But how did they pop up across our city? The stories behind the farms are even more impressive than the juicy, fresh produce you enjoy. Many of these farms went from vacant lots to thriving community treasures.



Here are the birth stories of five urban farms in different parts of the area.

How 5 Philly Neighborhood Urban Farms Began

1. North Philadelphia

Life Do Grow Farm (2315 N 11th St. Philadelphia, PA 19133)

The site of the Life Grow Do Farm used to be a vacant lot filled with garbage, but in 2010 a group of young community members decided to do something. They formed Urban Creators and converted the dump into an urban farm.

Since then, Urban Creators have been working to help their community through education and leadership initiatives. Their Regeneration mission uses the farm as a classroom to employ at-risk youth. The aim is to and engage them at the forefront of revitalizing their communities. Their approach is working, graduates of the program have lower rates of recidivism and the area surrounding the farm has seen a 40% drop in violent crime.

2. Kensington

Greensgrow (2501 E. Cumberland Street Philadelphia, PA 19125)

Back in 1997, Mary Seton Corboy and her partner, Tom Sereduk, started Greensgrow on a vacant lot that had been a previously brownfield. In the 20 years since then, Greensgrow has become Corboy's legacy. Greensgrow's mission is to create sustainable, connected, and healthy communities through urban farming.

A priority is making sure that their fresh food and CSA shares are accessible to everyone in the community. Greensgrow has been making strides in accessibility by introducing a "SNAP Share" available to families eligible for SNAP benefits and expanding into underserved communities.

3. West Philadelphia

Mill Creek Urban Farm (4901 Brown Street, Philadelphia, PA, 19123)

Located in West Philadelphia, Mill Creek is a non-profit educational farm and environmental education center. The farm's mission is to promote community food security by working with the locals to create an accessible, affordable, just, and sustainable food system for underserved neighborhoods.

The farm began in 2005 when non-profit agency A Little Taste of Everything (ALTOE) converted 1.5 acres of vacant land into a garden.

4. Southwest Philadelphia

The Farm at Bartram's Garden (5400 Lindbergh Blvd. Philadelphia, PA 19143)

In 2012, Bartram's Garden opened its Community Farm and Food Resource Center. Along with growing healthy, affordable produce, the farm also aims to empower the local community through building a local food system that is both environmentally and socially sustainable.

The community farm offers paid internships to local students, serving as valuable education and employment. Students learn to grow, harvest, and sell healthy organic produce as part of the partnership with the Agatston Urban Nutrition Initiative (AUNI) program.

5. Norristown

Edible Forest Urban Farm (417 Forrest Ave 19401 Norristown)

In 2010 two brothers and natives of Flint, Michigan, Joel and Caleb Derby, turned their home in Norristown into an urban farm. It started as their own personal garden, but that changed when they saw that there was a need in the community for access to healthy food. The brothers saw their farm as an opportunity to bring fresh fruits and vegetables to the neighborhood.

The farm now offers CSA shares to neighborhood residents, agriculture education classes, and space for couch surfers to stay and work on the farm.