

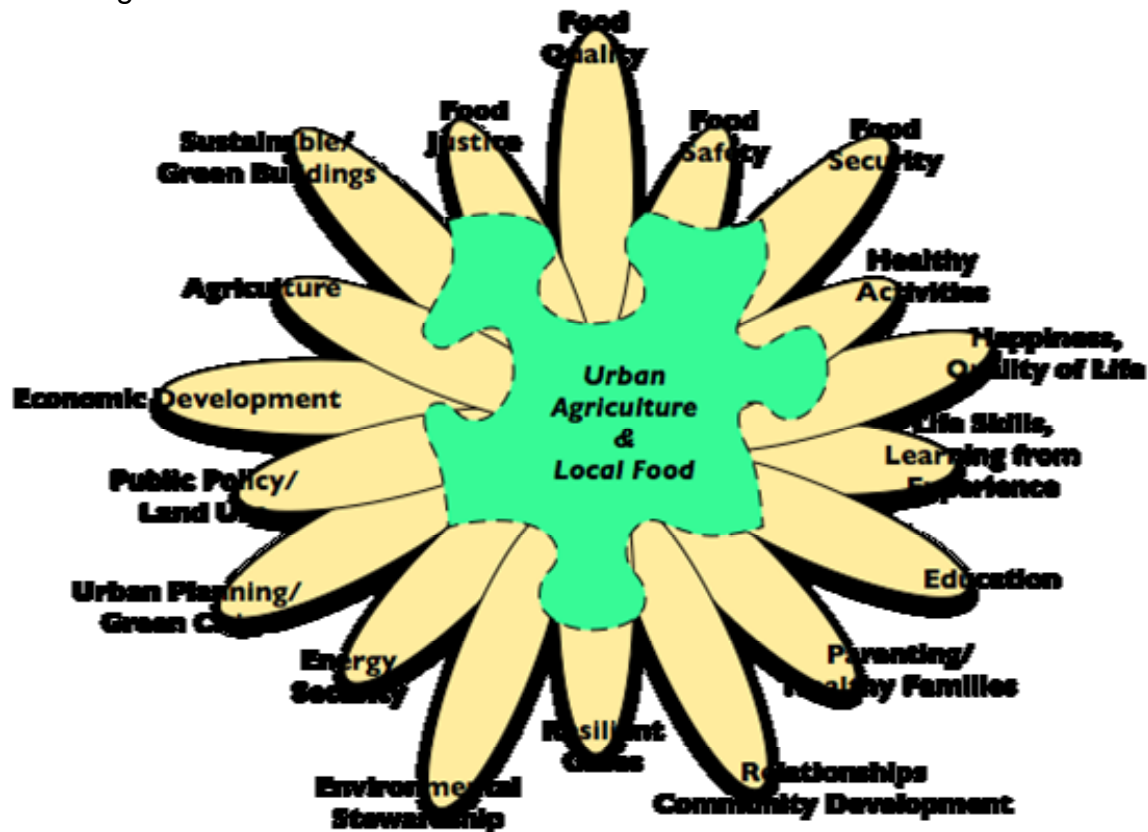
Urban Agriculture & Local Foods - Who's involved & Why?

It seems there's no limits on who can be involved - ages young to old, women & men, all cultures; retired or active working. No limits on whether you know anything about gardening or farming - or even whether you like it. If you look into any endeavour within the Urban Agriculture/Local Foods spectrum, you'll likely find there are many many roles, and you'll be able to find a need for your particular skill or interest.

What are the big reasons people get involved in Urban Agriculture/Local Foods? (They may prefer to call it other names - Community Gardens, Edible Landscapes, City Farms, Waste-to-Food or other terms)

People we talked to identified many reasons - the videos are but a snippet. And sometimes the reasons that brought them to an Urban Agriculture / Local Foods initiative aren't the same reasons they stay. Some of the reasons they give are the 'big reasons' (food justice, resilient cities, economic development), but it's also because they've found a role they enjoy - gardening, building toolsheds or raised beds, figuring out how to raise the quality of soil, make jam and jelly from harvested fruit and vegetables, raise bees or small animals, be a volunteer coordinator or an educator or....

The graphic below illustrates many of the 'big' reasons why people are involved in Urban Agriculture / Local Foods.



So Urban Agriculture and Local Foods are seen as part of the puzzle for achieving a wide variety of important aspects to a healthy, vibrant and sustainable society. As long as we don't start arguing whose reason is better, the diversity provides a good foundation for a movement to continue growing and expanding.

What we mean by Urban Agriculture influences the potential benefits we see - some focus only on the plant-based aspects, others include animals and bees. Annette Anderwald's conversation describes some of the benefits we'd derive by having a mix. Another consideration is the size we're imagining - balcony, back yard or back 40 as Gael Blackhall from Calgary Community Gardens Resource Network puts it.

The personal return on the investment of time and energy can come from the role one plays in Urban Agriculture and Local Foods. Later we talk about a way to 'unpack' some types of Urban Agriculture to see the wide range of roles that are possible.