

Edible Plants in Public Places Urban Agriculture Strategy

Strathcona County invited feedback on public agriculture in preparation for future programming in urban areas and hamlets.

[Public agriculture](#) refers to food grown in public spaces—such as parks, trails and planters—as a public or shared amenity. This program is one of seven strategy areas implemented by Strathcona County to support the realization of the long-term vision of the [Urban Agriculture Strategy](#).











Survey Results

From June to August 2018, the public was invited to complete an online survey on public agriculture regarding location preference for edible gardens and plants, as well as programming for urban agriculture learning activities. Two hundred and thirty-three surveys were collected with an 85 per cent completion rate.

The [Edible Garden](#) project was provided as an example of public agriculture. Planted in 2018 at Broadmoor Lake Park, the Edible Garden features five large planters filled with vegetables, herbs and edible flowers.

Survey highlights

- 95% of respondents would like more edible gardens and plants in public places in Strathcona County.
- Respondents were asked to provide specific locations where they would like to see edible gardens and plants. The question was open ended and produced multiple responses:
 - 92 responses generally wanted to see more edible gardens in Strathcona, with no preferred location provided.
 - 54 responses would like edible gardens added to Strathcona County parks.
 - 38 responses would like edible gardens added in close proximity to Strathcona County recreation and cultural centres.
 - 8 responses would like edible gardens added in close proximity to established community gardens.
 - 7 responses would like edible gardens added near schools.
 - 4 responses would like edible gardens added along streets (if safe to do so).
- Participants were invited to select the learning opportunities they would like Strathcona County to offer on urban agriculture. Responses are listed below:

Value		Percent	Responses
Pickle and canning workshops such as for jams, jellies, salsa, etc.		51.0%	74
Edible garden tour		60.0%	87
Beginner vegetable gardening workshop		53.1%	77
Permaculture workshop (I.E. ecological design principles)		43.4%	63
Compost and soil health workshop		55.9%	81
Orchard and fruit tree workshop		55.9%	81
Building bee motels		49.7%	72
Pollinator gardens		51.7%	75
Microgreens and indoor growing		46.2%	67
Other -		9.7%	14

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What's next?

County staff will work with community groups and volunteers to plan for future edible gardens and plants in public spaces. Strathcona County is supporting projects that incorporate edible trees and shrubs into Broadmoor Lake Park (2018), Emerald Hills Urban Village (2019) and at the Ardrossan Spray Park (2019).

An online [Edible Plant Map](#) that lists all the ways urban agriculture is growing in Strathcona County was developed in 2018. The goal of the map is to inventory and connect residents to public agriculture, community gardens and pollinator habitats.

Strathcona County will provide annual learning opportunities to support resident interest in urban agriculture. Two workshops on home pickling were offered in 2018. Additional activities are planned for 2019 that will focus on pollinator habitat and edible gardens tours, as well as canning and gardening techniques.