

GROWING HEALTHY FOOD



At the Grow Community on Bainbridge Island in Washington, vegetable gardens are a major focus. (Serena Peck)

COMMUNITY GARDENS, edible landscaping, and small farms grow produce that can make a healthy diet more accessible. Participation in community gardening activities can increase consumption of fruits and vegetables,²⁰ and when community members come together around the growing of food, the interaction promotes social bonds and connections.²¹ Local produce helps reduce pollution associated with shipping food long distances.²² In recent years, gardening has enjoyed a growing popularity, a trend that is likely to continue. Small farms can take the place of golf courses as community centerpieces, can cost less on an upfront and ongoing basis, and can provide community members with fresh, locally grown food.

EXPLORATION

Edible Landscaping

EDIBLE LANDSCAPING is the practice of integrating food-producing plants, such as trees, shrubs, and herbs, into a landscape design. A variety of edibles—such as berry bushes, fruit and nut trees, lettuce, cherry tomatoes, and herbs—can be integrated with more traditional plants to create an ornamental and productive landscape. With the burgeoning interest in gardening and local food, edible landscaping can contribute to a project's market appeal.

Edible landscaping can be integrated into any type of project. Label the plants and trees, and include signage that encourages or provides guidelines for harvesting the edibles. Programming activities, including group planting or harvesting events, can build resident and tenant engagement.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- ➔ "Extension Fact Sheet: Edible Landscaping," Ohio State University <http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/1000/pdf/1255.pdf>
- ➔ "Edible Landscaping Basics," in Rosalind Creasy, *Edible Landscaping* www.rosalindcreasy.com/edible-landscaping-basics