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Keeping community in urban agriculture

Posted by: [The Michigan Citizen](#) Posted date: [February 16, 2013](#) In: [Fresh Ideas](#) | comment : 0



Volunteers helping with "Rolling Thunder" season extension hoophouse at D-Town Farm. PHOTO BY ROXANNE MOORE

By [Roxanne M. Moore](#)
[Special to the Michigan Citizen](#)

There has been a lot of discussion around large-scale urban agriculture in a city that is world renown for the re-emergence of community based agricultural projects. It is my hope that the influx of organizations and corporations in the transition in the city will not be a hindrance to the sustainability of long-standing community gardening projects. The projects have helped feed many people around the city, as well as heal and reconnect people with each other and the land. As gardeners, many honor the actual work of cultivating and harvesting as beneficial to their mental state beyond what it does for them physically. It is done sometimes privately but also in groups, a time for reflection and communion. So much can be said about it that this writer encourages you to pursue even the start of a window sill container to experience the joy of caring for and watching things grow.

Not to dogmatize urban agriculture, it is not all things to all people. It is though, by virtue of necessity, an asset to many. Let it not be foregone by the establishment of projects that did not originate from community, that while inevitably hold space, be swallowed alive by larger entities. Not necessarily literally but in our minds and efforts.

We need these same community-based projects like Detroit Black Community Food Security Network, Earthworks Urban Farm, Freedom Freedom Growers, Georgia Street Community Collective, Neighbors Building Brightmoor, as well as the lot on your block without a name that is beautiful and has grown vegetables and taught your children how to plant a seed. They still need to receive the energy, attention and support throughout the process of change around Detroit. They are among the trailblazers that in recent history made urban agriculture sexy. So intoxicating that world media took interest and now we are placed on the world stage.

Know that at the root of it all are the people and the desire to ensure that folks have quality food. At a very basic level, food sovereignty is being able to grow on your own land what it is that will sustain you and your family. Barring all else, we must protect that right.

Earthworks has an agriculture training program that will begin soon. In interviewing prospective participants, so much is expressed in the desire to learn about growing food to feed people in the neighborhood and encourage the young as well as elders. It never fails to warm my heart to hear what

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good people want to learn and give back to community. They have a vision of what their neighborhoods can become. From all parts of life they come to pursue their dreams and it is most times with others in mind. That is the current spirit in our city. Please know that this is happening and it is positive and it is Detroit.

For instance, Detroit Black Community Food Security Network is commemorating its seven-year anniversary with a themed celebration, Embracing Our Agricultural Legacy. Taking place on March 30 at International Institute, 111 E. Kirby, in Detroit from 6-9 p.m., this event will highlight pioneers in both rural and urban agriculture. This is an excellent opportunity to learn not only about what DBCFSN is doing but also network with community. It has been, in years previous, a festive family gathering that many have enjoyed. This year promises to follow suit. For tickets and more information, call 313.345.3663 or visit www.detroitblackfoodsecurity.org.

All the aforementioned organizations are doing inspiring, transformative work. Find out more by joining them on Facebook or take a walk down the street as the season begins and lend a hand.

As spring approaches please keep in mind that we are but vessels of nature. It wields its own power and will produce what it may. Support the good stewards and hold accountable anyone or thing that is detriment. We will continue to do the work and welcome your support.


Roxanne Moore works with Earthworks Urban Farm and is a community-at-large member of the Detroit Food Policy Council.

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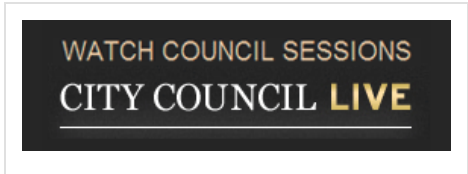
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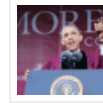
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