

Urban Agriculture in Arlington Virginia



Virginia Cooperative Extension
Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

Demographics

- Population
 - 229,164
 - 283,000 persons by 2040.
- 65% live in multi family unit buildings
- Size
 - 26 sq mi (67 km²)
- Highest Median family income in US
 - \$137,216
- 104 languages/116 countries.
- Highest % of singles!
- 72% college degrees



What's Urban Agriculture?



“Reevesland” with Joan Horwitt
co-Chair of Urban Ag Task Force at right



PHOTO CREDIT: David Hills

‘Agriculture’- the cultivation and breeding of animals, plants and fungi for food, fiber, biofuel, medicinal plants and other products used to sustain and enhance human life

Smart Urban Growth = greenspace



- 42% Impervious surface in Arlington
- Tree canopy coverage= 43%
- Rain Garden installations and permeable paver installation funding.
- Tree Canopy Fund
- What about gardening?

Why “Urban” Agriculture?

Diet Related Health Issues	Arl.	Alex.	VA
% overweight/obese	40.1	51.6	61.7
% consuming 5 Servings fruit/Veg/day	68.4	70.6	73.7
% with diabetes	5.1	3.9	7.8
% with high blood pressure	21.3	20.1	28%
% with high cholesterol	32.4	30.5	38.1
% physically inactive	46.4	45.6	49.8
% living below 100% poverty level	6.8	6.7	9.9

Source: VDH 2010

Ability To Feed Families	Arl	Alex	VA
Food Insecurity	7.2	8.9	11.8
% living below 130% poverty	32	36	40

Source: Feeding American 2011



Photo Credit: <http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/arlington.htm>

2200 families per week are served by the Arlington Food Bank.










Arlington County Urban Agriculture - a timeline.

- 1960 Last working farm closes
- 1979 Establishment of the MG program and subsequent demonstration gardens
- 1988 Establishment of Arlington Food Assistance Center
- 2009 Creation of 'Plot Against Hunger'
- 2010 VCE Urban Agriculture Lecture Series
- 2010 Restoration of the Arlington House Garden
- 2010 VCE Growing Communities Workshop
- 2011 Dedication of Reevesland Garden
- 2011 Arlington Egg Project
- 2012 HCAT VCE Community Garden Grant Program
- 2012 Urban Agriculture Task Force Formed
- 2013 VCE Takes over Arlington County Fair Competitive Fruit, Vegetable, Flower, Herb Shows
- 2013 Arlington County Food Action Plan adopted
- 2015 first of annual VCE Urban Agriculture Symposium
- 2017 State Urban Agriculture Summit to be convened in Arlington



Arlington House Garden, NPS, Arlington Cemetery

9 Recommendations of the 2013 Urban Agriculture Task Force

-  1. Establish an ongoing Commission on Urban Agriculture, similar to other County advisory commissions.
-  2. Review all county planning documents to ensure that urban agriculture and sustainable food planning are integrated.
-  3. Expand availability of community gardens, urban farms, and other urban agriculture initiatives by identifying additional sites across the County.
-  4. Strengthen Arlington's Farmers' Markets network by (a) facilitating use of SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits at all market locations and (b) supporting creation of a permanent covered year-round Farmers' Market.
-  5. Encourage the establishment of a local food hub, including an online option, to match food producers, distributors and consumers.
-  6. Replicate Crystal City BID (Business Improvement District) model for community-supported agriculture (CSA)/farm-to-consumer agriculture.
-  7. Leverage libraries, schools, universities, and adult education to bring healthy eating and urban agriculture education to Arlington residents of every age and residential context.
-  8. Ensure that urban agriculture education focusing on Arlington schoolchildren is given top priority in any adaptive reuse or repurposing of Reeves historic farmhouse.
-  9. Initiate municipal composting system to ensure an effective and ecologically appropriate disposal, reuse, and recycling system for yard waste and other organic materials.

St Andrews Church Plot Garden
2179 pounds (including a bushel and a half of apples)

Plot Against Hunger!

- Gleaning at USDA, Farmer's Markets
- 'Plot Gardens'
- Processing and distribution through the Arlington Food Assistance Center
- APS and Arlington Career Center
- Churches
- Community Center Recreation programming
- Since its first season in 2007- 2015 over 450,000 lbs of fresh food is donate.
- 2016- 81,548 lbs!
 - (Churches: 3,881, markets 69,025, schools 1,543; Individuals 3,245, Organization 1,431)



Arlington Central Library



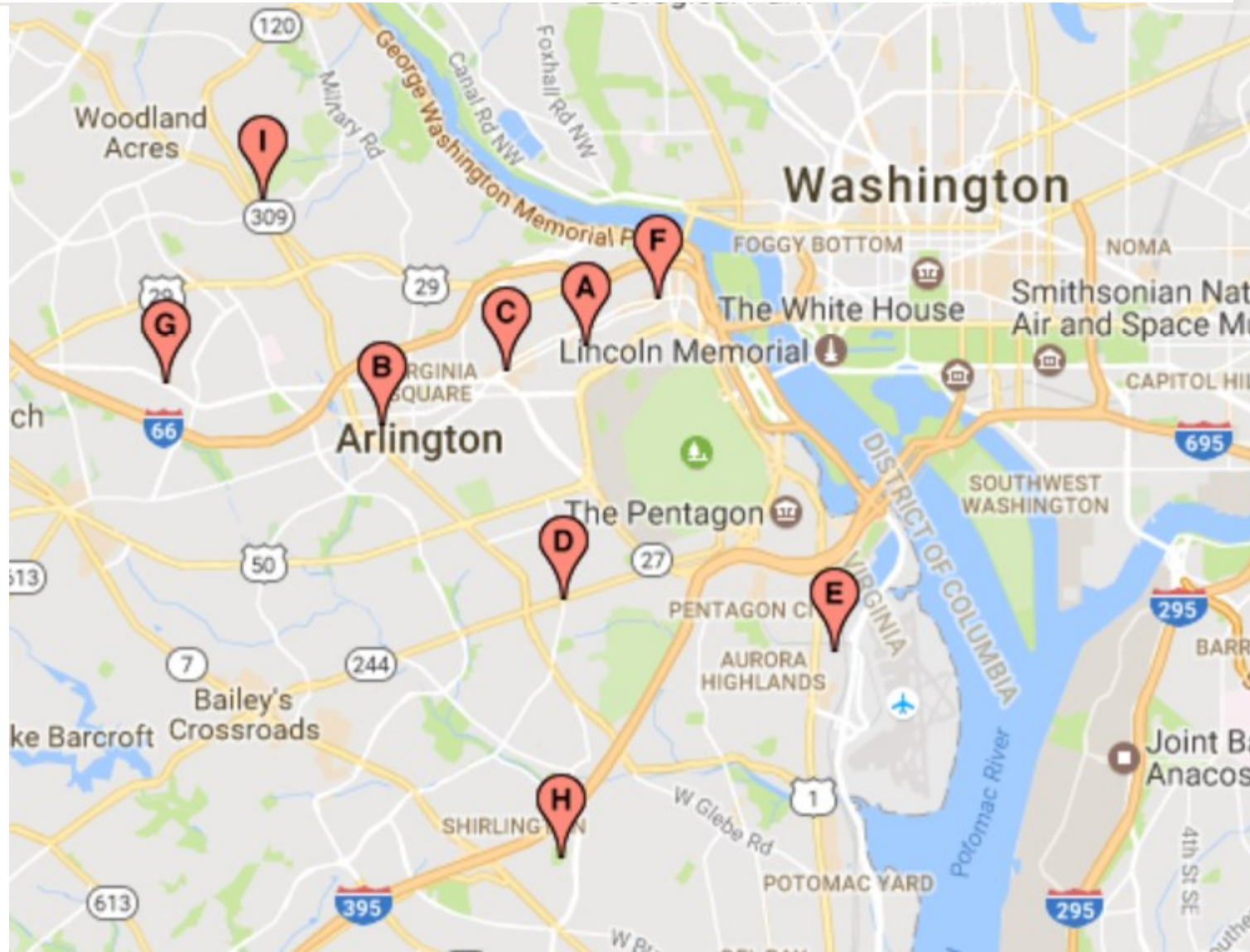
Central Library Garden Early Spring lettuce crop

- “Edible Landscaping”
- Weekly VCE Master Gardener Plant Clinic
- Tools ‘Library’
- Wednesdays in the Garden



Arlington Farmer's Markets

- A. Arlington Farmers' Market
- B. Ballston Farmers Market
- C. Clarendon Farmer's Market
- D. Columbia Pike Farmers Market
- E. Crystal City Freshfarm Market
- F. Rosslyn Farmers Market
- G. Westover Farmers Market
- H. Fairlington Farmer's Market
- I. Marymont Farmer's Market



Community Gardens

- Alexandria- 3 gardens
- Arlington- 8 gardens---340 plots
 - THREE YEAR waiting list!
- Private Property Community Gardens
 - HOAs and Property Management Co.
 - Schools
 - Churches, Synagogues
 - Businesses
 - Vacant lots/developers
 - Impermeable surfaces



Top: Reevesland Lawns to Lettuce to Lunch
Bottom: Walter Reed Community Garden



VCE- ANR Program Master Gardener Volunteers

- 5 Gardens in Arlington/Alexandria
- Partnerships with NoVA Regional Park Authority, City of Alexandria, Arlington County, Arlington Food Assistance Center, Friends of Urban Ag.



Public Education classes
Demo Garden Programs
Wednesdays in the Garden
Plant NOVA Natives
Audubon At Home
Community Garden Coaches
4H Junior Master Gardeners



The future?

- Roof top gardening
- Waste recycling
- Aquaculture, Hydroponics, aeroponics
- Greater utilization and acceptance of private greenspace for community gardening.
- Education!!
 - Gardening under the trees- medicinals, mushrooms,
 - Lawn conversion for alternate uses
 - Composting and waste reduction
 - Role of plants in a sustainable landscape
 - Soil and water quality and conservation



Cora Kelly School, Alexandria

Additional Resources for Communities

- **Arlington County**
- **American Community Gardening Association Resources**
<https://communitygarden.org/resources/>
- **Virginia Cooperative Extension**
 - Community Food Systems Resources:
<http://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/category/community-food-systems.html>
- **Harding Street Urban Agriculture Center Petersburg VA, VSU**
 - <https://www.ext.vsu.edu/harding-st-project/>
- **Greater Prince William Food Council**
 - <http://gpwfoodcouncil.org/>
- **DC Food Policy Council**
 - <https://dcfoodpolicy.org/>



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Wednesdays in the Garden

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