



CITY OF KNOXVILLE

MADELINE ROGERO, MAYOR

Urban Agriculture FAQ's

What is urban agriculture?

Urban agriculture is the growing of food and non-food crops in urban and suburban settings. It includes things like gardening, beekeeping, composting, keeping domesticated chickens, and more.

Urban agriculture increases the access Knoxville residents have to healthy, locally grown food. It also contributes to Knoxville's economy by generating jobs and increasing the sales of locally grown food at farmers' markets, grocery stores, and farm stands. Additionally, urban agriculture helps to improve Knoxville neighborhoods and reduce the amounts of blighted and vacant properties in Knoxville.

What types of gardens are allowed in Knoxville?

Three types of gardens are allowed to be kept in Knoxville. These are:

- 1) **Personal gardens:** gardens grown by the property owner or another interested party for family enjoyment and consumption of crops. Both food and non-food crops may be grown on a personal garden. Personal gardens may be either the primary or secondary use of a property.
- 2) **Market gardens:** Market gardens are managed and maintained by an individual, group, or business for the purpose of growing and harvesting crops for profit. Both food and non-food crops may be grown on market gardens to be sold on-site, off-site, or at farmer's markets.
- 3) **Community gardens:** Community gardens are managed and maintained by a nonprofit or a group of individuals for the purpose of growing and harvesting crops for personal use, consumption, or donation. Both food and non-food crops may be grown in a community garden. Community gardens may be either the primary or secondary use of a property.

Can I sell food from my personal garden?

Yes; however, you will need to apply for a temporary permit for a seasonal produce stand. Contact the Plans Review & Inspections department at (865) 215-4830 for permit information.

How do I start or join a community garden?

There is guide on starting a community garden compiled by the Knox County Health Department and Food Policy Council. It's recommended that you review that. The guide can be found here: <http://knoxfood.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/toolkit.pdf>

If you're interested in joining an existing community garden, find one in your neighborhood by using our community garden and farmers market map at www.knoxvilletn.gov/sustainability/. Click on "Urban Agriculture Initiative" for more information.

Can I compost on my property?

Yes. Composting must be done in the backyard and compost piles must be at least 5 feet from property lot lines. Compost piles cannot be greater than 6 feet tall or larger than 5% of the parcel area, and must be enclosed or contained.

For more on composting best practices, check out these tips from UT's Extension Office: <http://extension.tennessee.edu/Benton/pages/composting.aspx>

Can I keep bees on my property?

An apiary is one or more bee colonies kept for agricultural purposes. Residents may keep beehives on their property, but for the safety and comfort of their neighbors, the following are required:

- Hives must be kept in side or back yards
- Keep hives must be set back at least 15 feet
- Hives must face away from the nearest neighboring property
- Rooftop hives must be kept at least 20 feet from doors and windows of the neighboring property, or must utilize a flyway to alter the bee flight path.

All new apiaries must be registered with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture. Visit <https://www.tn.gov/agriculture/article/ag-businesses-apiary-registration> for more information.

Can I have accessory structures related to agriculture?

Yes, greenhouses, low tunnels, high tunnels, sheds, and cold frames are allowed. Contact the Plans Review and Inspections department at (865) 215-3669 for permitting requirements.