There is a rising demand for sustainably produced, local food in cities. In fact, today 15% of our food originates from metropolitan areas. Pinellas County has 85 known community gardens, school gardens, and urban or hydroponic farms, and that number continues to grow. The economic, health, social and environmental benefits of urban agriculture to communities are numerous, contributing to community sustainability and resiliency.

Urban agriculture:

- Increases access to affordable fresh produce, reducing food insecurity
- Has been shown to increase neighboring property values
- Stimulates the local economy and creates jobs where people live
- Increases consumption of fruits and vegetables which reduces likelihood of disease
- Provides access to greenspace, which is shown to contribute to good mental health
- Fosters a sense of community
- Helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Leads to creative solutions for dealing with waste, space, energy and resources

This handout is designed to serve as a navigational guide through City regulations, services and grants.

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HELPFUL CONTACT INFORMATION

Zoning Approval:
Development Review Services Division
Municipal Services Building, 1st Floor
One Fourth Street North
St. Petersburg, FL 33701
(727) 893-7471
devrev@stpete.org

Business Tax and Licensing:
Business Tax Division
Municipal Service Building, 1st Floor
325 Central Avenue
St. Petersburg, FL 33701
727-893-7241 (Option 2)
License@stpete.org

Community Services:
Community Services Department
City Hall
175 5th Street North
St. Petersburg, FL 33701
(727) 892-5141

Economic Incentives/Brownfields:
Economic Development Department
Municipal Services Building, 9th Floor
One Fourth Street North
St. Petersburg, FL 33701
(727) 893-7100
Business@stpete.org

Business Assistance:
St. Pete Greenhouse
440 Second Avenue North
St. Petersburg, FL 33701
(727) 893-7146
https://stpetegreenhouse.com

Mulch and Soil Builder:
Sanitation Department
(727) 893-7942
http://www.stpete.org/sanitation/index.php

Parks and Recreation:
Parks and Recreation Department
1400 19th Street North
St. Petersburg, FL 33713
(727) 893-7441
http://www.stpeteparksrec.org

Water Services:
Billing and Collections Department
325 Central Avenue
St. Petersburg, FL 33701
(727) 893-7341
Utility.Bill@stpete.org

Water Conservation and Restrictions:
Water Resources Department
1650 Third Avenue North
St. Petersburg, FL 33713
(727) 892-5688
WaterDept@stpete.org

City-Owned Vacant Land:
Real Estate and Property Management Department
Municipal Services Building, 9th Floor
One Fourth Street North
St. Petersburg, FL 33701
(800) 874-9026 (toll free)
(727) 893-7500 (voice)

Sustainability:
Integrated Sustainability Action Plan
Office of Sustainability and Resiliency
City Hall
175 5th Street North
St. Petersburg, FL 33701
(727) 551-3396
sharon.wright@stpete.org

Comprehensive Plan and Code Updates:
Urban Planning and Historic Preservation Division
Municipal Services Building, 8th Floor
One Fourth Street North
St. Petersburg, FL 33701
(727) 892-5255
Robyn.keepe@stpete.org
PATHWAYS FOR URBAN AGRICULTURE IN CITY ZONING CODE
The City recognizes that urban agriculture has many benefits to the surrounding community. The purpose and intent of the following regulations are to mitigate any undesirable impacts that might be detrimental to the quality of life of adjacent properties.

In the City of St. Petersburg, there are two primary land use types that fall under the heading of urban agriculture: Community Gardens AND Commercial Gardens AND Greenhouses.

COMMUNITY GARDENS

A Community Garden allows the growing, harvesting, and in commercial districts, retail sales, of edible fruits or vegetables or other plant products intended for consumption by neighboring residents, friends, owners, and the permittees of the owner. Community gardens are operated on a not-for-profit basis.

Community garden regulations can be found in Sections 16.50.085 and 16.70.030.1.13 of City Code. Additionally, a handout specific to regulations for community gardens is given out by Development Review Services.

LOCATION
Community gardens are allowed in all zoning districts as a principal use, subject to administrative approval. City regulations pertaining to community gardens do not apply to a garden that is accessory to some other principal use, including but not limited to, residences, schools, restaurants, and houses of worship.

SALES
On-site retail sales of products grown on-site, including value added-products such as pickles and jams, are permitted only in commercial zoning districts and may not take place before 7:00 a.m. or after 9:00 p.m. In neighborhood districts, surplus produce may be sold off the premises to assist in defraying the costs of the community garden.

PERMITTING PROCESS
New community gardens must apply for a permit that must be renewed annually. The cost is $50. Submit a Community Garden Permit application to Development Review Services, located on the first floor of the Municipal Services Center, along with a signed letter of consent from the property and a diagram (to scale) of the Community Garden showing:

- Fences or barriers
- Property lines
- Sidewalks, curbs, public improvements (benches, street lights, fire hydrants, etc.)
- Location of garden plots with dimensions
- Distance from garden plots to property lines
- Location of irrigation
- Location of any structures on property
- Location of compost or other vegetative material
- Location of trash containers
- Location of any signage or lighting

The applicant is required to provide public notice to property owners within 200 feet of the proposed location at least 30 days prior to the date the permit is to take effect.
COMMERCIAL GARDENS AND GREENHOUSES

A Commercial Garden and Greenhouse is defined as an establishment for the propagation, processing and storage of plants produced for wholesale or retail sales. Typical uses include, but are not limited to, growing beds, greenhouses, vertical farming and hydroponic systems.

Commercial Gardens and Greenhouses regulations can be found in Section 16.10.020.1 of City Code.

LOCATION
Commercial Gardens and Greenhouse uses are allowed in Industrial zoning districts by Special Exception, which requires a public hearing for approval.

PROCESS
New Commercial Garden and Greenhouses may be approved as a Special Exception. The one-time cost (unless modified) is $1,000. Schedule a pre-application meeting with Development Review Services by calling 727-892-5498 to get started. Applicants must submit the Special Exception application along with any required submittals, inclusive of but not limited to two copies of a site plan or survey, a landscape plan, elevation drawings depicting any structures onsite, a traffic impact report, and public participation report.

After Staff have reviewed the application, they will send a report to the Development Review Commission (DRC) recommending approval, approval with conditions, or denial. The DRC will hold a public hearing where a final decision will be made. All decisions will be based upon the review criteria outlined in Section 16.70.040.1.5.

OPTIONS FOR SALE OF PRODUCE IN NON-COMMERCIAL ZONING DISTRICTS
The City understands that sale of produce is important to offsetting garden costs and sustaining operations. While onsite sales activity is not currently allowed in neighborhood zoning districts, there are a variety of other options to consider. Any regular sales activities will require a business license with its own separate fee. Educational, charitable and religious organizations are exempt from the fee if they can prove they have that specific IRS exemption.

OFFSITE SALES AT FARMERS MARKETS, RESTAURANTS, INSTITUTIONS, AND FOOD RETAILERS
Residents/garden operators may sell produce offsite.

RECREATION CENTER PARKING LOTS/POOLS
The Parks and Recreation Department has established a policy for allowing produce vending at designated recreation center parking lots and pool locations. Call (727) 893-7441 for more information.

PUSHCART VENDING
Pushcart vending is allowed in downtown (in the public right-of-way) and in any commercial zoning district (on private property) where there is an existing commercial use. The annual permit fee is $170 with $85 renewals. Contact Development Review Services at devrev@stpete.org for more information.
ROADSIDE VENDING MARKETS
Roadside vending markets are allowed on private property at specified intersections.

TEMPORARY USE PERMIT
Temporary Use permits may be issued for a maximum period of six months and are not intended for permanent sales activity. Temporary Use permits could be issued for temporary sales in church parking lots, apartment parking lots, school parking lots, and other appropriate locations.

EDIBLE LANDSCAPING
Food-producing trees and plants are allowed under Code providing that they are maintained in accordance with all relevant regulations.

LANDSCAPE ON PRIVATE PROPERTY
There are no restrictions on gardening on private property (front yard or back) providing that gardens are properly maintained (see Section 16.40.060.3.1) and watered based on St. Petersburg watering restrictions (See Sections 27.42 through 27.48).
LANDSCAPE IN THE PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY (ROW)
Edible landscaping may be planted in the public ROW providing there is no approved streetscape plan and that the public ROW is not adjacent to a major street or state roadway.

- Decorative objects, including, but not limited to, rocks and planter beds, must not be located within four feet of the curb of the street, or where there is no curb, the road edge.
- Where landscaping material is used in the ROW within four feet of the curb or road edge, the landscaping materials, excluding sod, must not exceed 24 inches in height above the top of the adjacent curb, or if there is no curb, the road bed, provided that the landscaping material does not result in a hazard or impairment to public vehicular or pedestrian traffic or violate the visibility at intersection section.
- Vegetation which is a hazard to public safety is prohibited in the right-of-way. Hazardous vegetation with pronounced thorns (such as lime trees) must not be closer than two feet to a sidewalk or walkway.
- Vegetation adjacent to public sidewalks and public streets must not encroach onto the sidewalk or street surface.
- The branches of trees and shrubs which grow above sidewalks must provide a minimum of eight feet of vertical clearance and above streets and alleys, a minimum of 14 feet of vertical clearance.

KEEPING OF ANIMALS
The keeping of animals is regulated by Chapter 4 of the Municipal Code. Below is a summary of relevant regulations.

BEES
Apiaries are only allowed if the person owning or leasing the property is a beekeeper with an apiary that is registered with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

RABBITS
Rabbits may be kept so long as they are not allowed to run at large.

FOWL (CHICKENS, TURKEYS, DUCKS, GEESE, AND GUINEA Fowl)
Fowl may not run at large on property that is not their owner’s without permission. Fowl must be kept in a securely fenced area and confined to the premises of the owner.

- A coop must be provided to house the fowl when outside. Coops should have a maximum height of six feet and should not exceed 130 square feet. No coop is allowed in the front yard setback or beyond the front façade of the principal structure. Coops must comply with side and rear yard setback requirements.
- There must be at least four square feet within the coop for each fowl.
- All coops and fenced areas where fowl are kept must be kept clean and free from any offensive odors.
- There must be at least ten square feet of open area (outside of buildings and the coop) for each fowl.
• No more than 10 fowl are allowed on each property, regardless of the size of the property.
• All coops in residential zoning districts must be kept 50 feet from residences that are not the owner’s unless there is written consent.
• Noisy fowl, such as crowing roosters, which violate the City’s noise ordinances, will be considered a nuisance and banned from the property.

FARM ANIMALS (GOATS, SHEEP, SWINE, HORSES, DONKEYS, MULES, HINNIES, AND CATTLE)
• Horses, mules, donkeys, hinnies, or cows must have one acre. Sheep, goats, and swine must have at least one half of an acre.
• All farm animals must be kept in a securely fenced area which may not include any portion of the front yard.
• A structure providing sufficient shelter from inclement weather must be provided.
• Places where animals are kept must be clean and dry. Manure must be contained in accordance with City regulations.

Related Urban Agriculture Businesses
Urban agriculture is a field rife with innovation. As such, not every business model is going to be called out in or fit neatly into existing regulations (ex: composting business). Staff will, on a case-by-case basis, assess which regulations in the Code most closely fit with the business proposed and work with the applicant on what is required. Customers are advised to meet with staff in Development Review Services (DRS) as a first step to talk through the business concept and what it would look like as a land use. DRS staff will then advise on next steps. If a solution cannot be found, customers may set an appointment with the Urban Planning and Historic Preservation Division to discuss potential text amendments to the City Code.

Photo Source: compostpedallers.com
**WATER ACCESS AND CONSERVATION**

Water conservation and stormwater runoff prevention practices must be employed in accordance with applicable regulations adopted by the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) and the City. In addition, it is recommended that gardens use water conservation techniques, including sheet mulching, basins and swales, and drip irrigation systems. **Reclaimed water may not be used for watering edible plants.**

The Water Resources Department can help customers with acquiring water access for their garden projects and guide customers through the City’s water conservation regulations.

**OPTIONS FOR IRRIGATION**

Two primary options for irrigation-only water access exist: potable water connection and a private well installation.

**POTABLE WATER**

Irrigation-Only Meter Connection fee: Fees start at $400 if a meter exists, or $750 for new 5/8" meter installation. See [https://www.stpete.org/billing_and_collections/utility_billing/water.php/](https://www.stpete.org/billing_and_collections/utility_billing/water.php/) for base plus additional volume water rates.

**PRIVATE WELL**

Connection/Installation Fee: Fees vary starting around $2,000, depending on location, depth, size. Includes 4 parts: 1-1/2 hp pump, permit fee, timer, tank, and electrical connection. While there is no monthly water cost, electric or solar energy would be needed to operate pump and timer. Fencing may also be an additional cost to protect equipment.

For more information, please contact Water Resources, Utility Billing, at 893-7341.

**CONSERVING WATER**

In St. Petersburg every resident, visitor, business, and garden plays a role in conserving our precious water resources. Since 1986, potable water use has fallen from forty-one (41) to approximately twenty-eight (28) million gallons per day – about a 32% reduction!

**WATER RESTRICTIONS**

If an irrigation system will be used for watering, a watering restrictions variance needs to be applied for and granted by the City’s Water Conservation Coordinator. Call 727-892-5688/email WaterDept@stpete.org

Watering with potable (city) water, water from private wells, or private connections to surface water sources (lakes, ponds, etc.) is restricted according to property address number as follows:

- **Watering of established lawns and landscapes is permitted from 5 to 9 a.m. and/or from 7 to 11 p.m.**
- **Addresses ending in an EVEN number may irrigate on Tuesday and Saturday Only, if necessary.**
- **Addresses ending in an ODD numbers and locations with no address may irrigate on Wednesday and Sunday Only, if necessary.**
- **Hand watering of non-lawn landscape is allowed any day, at any time, if needed.**
- **Hand watering of lawn/turf is allowed ONLY during designated watering days and times.**
- **Regularly visit stpete.org/WaterRestrictions or call 727-892-5300 for schedule changes due to water shortages.**
- **An automatic shutoff device must be installed on any hose and used at all times.**
- **Micro-irrigation (low-flow or drip irrigation) is allowed any day, at any time, if needed.**
RAINWATER HARVESTING
Harvesting rainwater provides a supplemental watering source for non-potable outdoor uses. Storing rainwater in rain barrels and cisterns also helps reduce stormwater runoff, which may help minimize pollution in stormwater ponds, lakes and bays. Guidelines for installing, using and maintaining rainwater catchment systems have been developed to reinforce important health and safety principles. Visit www.watermatters.org/residents for more information. Some key guidelines include:

- Rainwater should not be used for drinking by humans.
- It is recommended that rainwater be used for indirect irrigation methods only (such as drip irrigation) when involving edible plants unless all produce is peeled or cooked prior to consumption.
- Plan for the use of an alternative watering source during dry periods when rainwater cannot be collected, which usually occurs from October through May.
- A catchment area, such as a roof, is necessary to collect and convey rainwater. You can estimate that 0.4 gallons of rainwater could be collected per square foot of catchment area (less than 100% of the rain will be collected).
- Use rainwater as soon as possible as, when not treated, water quality degrades quickly.
- Add filtration, such as a screen, to minimize debris in the storage tank, and clean out tanks regularly.
- Certified food grade storage containers offer sturdy structure and non-toxic properties.
- Design for rainwater overflow of the storage tank, which occurs often in our area of Florida.
- Screens or other protection should be used to prevent providing breeding areas for mosquitoes.
ACCESS TO CITY MULCH AND SOIL-BUILDER
Five city brush sites offer regular mulch for pick-up (free to city residents) or delivery (see fees below). A variety of other mulch products, and Soil-Builder, a soil amendment for sandy soils, are available for a charge (with fees starting at $8.00 per cubic yard) and by delivery only. For more information please call 727-893-7942.

MULCH PRODUCT MENU
Mulch is measured in cubic yards. One cubic yard will cover approximately 100 square feet, 3 inches deep.

**REGULAR MULCH**
Is material brought to the City Brush Sites and consists mostly of local plant materials which have been shredded and processed using windrow sanitization. Windrow sanitization is the process by which materials are placed in a long narrow row, turned for aeration, and maintained at or above 131°F for 3 days in order to eliminate weed seeds, insects, and plant pathogens.

**LOG MULCH**
Is material brought to the City Brush Sites and consists mostly of local hardwood tree materials, including logs and stumps which have been shredded.

**DOUBLE GROUND LOG MULCH**
Is material brought to the City Brush Sites and consists mostly of local hardwood tree materials, including logs and stumps which have been shredded two times. By shredding the material twice, it insures a more consistent size throughout the product.

**SOIL BUILDER**
Is made from screened mulch, consisting of local plant materials brought to the City Brush Sites and which have been shredded and processed using windrow sanitization. Windrow sanitization is the process by which materials are placed in a long narrow row, turned for aeration, and maintained at or above 131°F for 3 days to eliminate weed seeds, insects, and plant pathogens. This process is continued for a minimum of one year after which the material is screened. This product is not a compost. This product is a soil amendment sold for its properties to retain water and build soil organic matter. It is not a plant fertilizer and there is no guarantee that amendment to the soil will affect or stimulate plant growth.

**CITY BRUSH SITES**
Mulch can be picked up at the following locations:
1. 1000 62nd Avenue N.E.
2. 7750 26th Avenue N.
3. 2500 26th Avenue S.
4. 4015 Dr. Martin Luther King St S.
5. 2453 20th Avenue N.

**MULCH DELIVERY COSTS**
Mulch will be delivered to City locations only. Fees may change from year to year.
- 1 to 6 cubic yards: $25
- 7 to 12 cubic yards: $50
- 20 or 30 cubic yards: $50

Fill out a Mulch Order Form at [http://www.stpete.org/sanitation/docs/New%20Mulch%20Order%20Form.pdf](http://www.stpete.org/sanitation/docs/New%20Mulch%20Order%20Form.pdf)
SOIL SAFETY AND TESTING
While there are many benefits associated with soil building in cities, it is important to test your soil and follow best practices for gardening in soil safely. The first step is to research past uses of the land with the help of the Planning and Development Services Department. Former uses may be important when deciding what type of garden to build, what types of soil amendments to use, and what type of tests to order. If the past use of the land was industrial, it is important to test for the presence of heavy metals and other contaminants. Depending on geographic area, there may be City administered funding available to do a more in-depth soil assessment. Gardens must comply with all federal, state and local regulations pertaining to agricultural production and soil suitability.

More information about safe gardening practices can be found at the University of Florida/Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) Extension – Pinellas County. Contact their office by calling (727) 582-2100 or visit their website at http://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/pinellas/urban-agriculture.

FINDING LAND
Given the high cost of land in a built-out city like St. Petersburg, it is important think creatively when seeking locations for future urban agriculture projects and to engage the surrounding community in the process. Consider partnering with other businesses, churches and schools. Vacant lots suitable for urban agriculture will most likely be located in neighborhood zoning districts, which do not allow onsite sales. Make sure to search for a water source (i.e. existing potable water meter or groundwater well).

Neighborhood associations with significant support for a community garden should contact the Community Services Department as a first step (727-892-5141). Aspiring commercial farmers should consider contacting the Urban Planning and Historic Preservation Division for input by calling (727) 892-5255.

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES
Grants, for neighborhood-based organizations (see specific program details), can be found at http://www.stpete.org/assistance/grants_and_contracts/internal_grants_program.php. For more information, contact the Community Services Department at 727-892-5141.

Mayor’s Neighborhood Mini-Grants
$500 can be used towards community involvement activities including block parties or spring fiestas. Applicants must be a neighborhood, homeowner or business association listed on the City’s neighborhood contact list, or Police Department vetted crime watch group; or in the process of forming an association, with the assistance of the City.

Neighborhood Partnership Matching Grant
Applicants can be awarded up to $20,000 for neighborhood physical improvement projects; proposals are accepted throughout the year. The grants can be matched with volunteer hours ($24/hour), in-kind services or dollars. Applicants must be a neighborhood, homeowner or business association listed on the City’s neighborhood contact list; or in the process of forming an association, with the assistance of the City.
PLANS AND POLICY
The City of St. Petersburg is committed to encouraging the development of a sustainable, local food system through its plans and policies. The following are some ongoing initiatives:

Integrated Sustainability Action Plan
The City is developing its first ever Integrated Sustainability Action Plan (ISAP). The ISAP will:

- Define the City’s and community’s existing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory and identify reduction strategies;
- Develop a roadmap for 100% clean energy in the City; and,
- Guide the City and community partners to implement programs and strategies that will enhance sustainability and resiliency across municipal department operations and throughout the community.

The ISAP is utilizing the STAR Communities framework to prioritize policies and projects across a range of topic areas contributing to community sustainability and resiliency, including the Food System. Contact StPetelISAP@vhb.com to share thoughts, suggestions, and strategies.

Proposed Urban Agriculture Ordinance
The Urban Planning and Historic Preservation Division has worked with community stakeholders since 2013 to draft a comprehensive set of amendments to City Code for urban agriculture, including expanding opportunities for onsite sales and commercial urban agriculture. Currently the ordinance is on hold until legislative changes are made at the County and State Levels. For more information and an opportunity to review the proposed language, contact Robyn Keefe at (727) 892-5255 or robyn.keefe@stpete.org.

Urban Agriculture Handbook for Local Governments
Forward Pinellas, the county-level land use agency for our area, recently published a comprehensive policy guide for urban agriculture as a resource for local governments and interested members of the public. Check it out by visiting http://forwardpinellas.org/projects/urban-agriculture.

Helpful Community Resources
For community, classes, and educational resources, check out the following:

Sustainable Urban Agriculture Coalition (SUAC)
SUAC expands sustainable urban agriculture by facilitating the creation of edible gardens wherever possible, and providing assistance, resources and expertise. Email contact@suacstpete.org for more information.

Food Systems Center at Pinellas Technical College
The Food Systems Center provides topic-specific coursework around the development of equitable food systems within an urban and peri-urban environment. Contact 808-202-3048 for more information.

UF/IFAS Extension Pinellas County
UF/IFAS Extension Pinellas County is the local branch of a nationwide network of land grant universities providing non-biased, research-based information to America’s citizens, and is a cooperative partnership between Pinellas County Government and the University of Florida in Gainesville. Visit their website at http://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/pinellas/urban-agriculture or contact them at gardenhelp@pinellascounty.org or (727) 582-2100 for best practices related to gardening in Florida.