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Farm Service Agency
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

USDA Opens People's Garden Initiative Nationwide

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Contact:

cassie.neusch@usda.gov

COLLEGE STATION, Texas, Sept. 15, 2022 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is expanding its People's Garden Initiative to include eligible gardens nationwide. School gardens, community gardens, urban farms, and small-scale agriculture projects in rural, suburban, and urban areas can be recognized as a "People's Garden" if they register on the USDA website and meet criteria including benefitting the community, working collaboratively, incorporating conservation practices, and educating the public. Affiliate People's Garden locations will be indicated on a map on the USDA website, featured in USDA communications, and provided with a People's Garden sign.

"We inaugurated the first [Texas-based People's Garden](#) in Dallas Sept. 8, 2022, and are now anxious to welcome gardens statewide to join us in the People's Garden effort and all it represents," said Kristy Oates, State Conservationist in Texas. "I know local gardens across our great state share USDA's goals of building more diversified and resilient local food systems, empowering our communities to come together around expanding access to healthy food, addressing climate change and advancing equity."

About People's Gardens?

USDA originally launched the People's Garden Initiative in 2009. It's named for the "People's Department," former President Abraham Lincoln's nickname for USDA, which was established during his presidency in 1862.??

People's Gardens grow fresh, healthy food and support resilient, local food systems; teach people how to garden using conservation practices; nurture habitat for pollinators and wildlife and create greenspace for neighbors.

"We encourage existing gardens and new gardens to join the movement," said Kelly Adkins, State Executive Director for the Farm Service Agency in Texas. "Growing local food benefits local

communities in so many ways, and we offer technical resources to help. Also, it's a great way to connect with your local USDA team members.”

“We are working to increase urban and suburban agriculture because it plays a tremendously important role in growing fresh, healthy produce locally, while also providing jobs, beautifying neighborhoods, and offering residents access to fresh, healthy food in areas where grocery stores are scarce,” said Oates.

How to Register

To learn more about People’s Garden or to register one, visit the People’s Garden webpage at usda.gov/peoples-garden. The location and information on each garden will be displayed on a map. USDA will send a “People’s Garden” sign to each garden and invite continued engagement through photos and information sharing. Gardens on federal property, such as USDA offices, are required to donate produce. We invite these gardens to report how much is being donated.

To be eligible, gardens are recognized if they:

- **Benefit the community** by providing food, green space, wildlife habitat, education space.
- **Are a collaborative effort.** This can include groups working together with USDA agencies, food banks, after school programs, Girl Scouts, Master Gardeners, conservation districts, etc.
- **Incorporate conservation management practices**, such as using native plant species, rain barrels, integrated pest management, xeriscaping.
- **Educate the public** about sustainable gardening practices and the importance of local, diverse, and resilient food systems providing healthy food for the community.

New gardens will join the People’s Garden at USDA headquarters in Washington, D.C. and 17 other flagship gardens established earlier this year.

More Information

The People’s Garden Initiative is part of USDA’s broader efforts to advance equity, support local and regional food systems and access to food, and encourage use of conservation and climate-smart practices.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. Under the Biden-Harris administration, USDA is transforming America’s food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in

infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit usda.gov.

Farm Service Agency:

1400 Independence Ave.
SW Washington, DC 20250

Contact:

FPAC Press Desk
FPAC.BC.Press@usda.gov