

Urban Farming in Vancouver

An Overview of City Policy & Regulations

What is Urban Farming?

In Vancouver, urban farming is defined in our Zoning Bylaw as growing fruits and vegetables for sale. Urban farms may be operated on or-profit, non-profit, or a social enterprise models.

Many urban farms do more than "just" grow food; they also build community, host events and workshops, provide employment or support food security initiatives.



Why Urban Farming?

Urban farming provides many benefits including greening the city, improving biodiversity, activating under-utilized spaces, producing food closer to home, and building community.

Urban farming also enhances the local food economy by creating green jobs (including food retail, distribution and processing), building skills and shortening food supply chains.

The City's Greenest City Action Plan and Vancouver Food Strategy identify urban farms as key food assets that contribute to sustainable food systems.

- Greenest City 2020 Action Plan: Tracks urban farms as a key metric to achieving the City's goal of increasing local food assets by 50% by the year 2020.
- Vancouver Food Strategy: Identifies urban farming as a priority action area that can enhance Vancouver's green economy.
- Healthy City Strategy: Identifies a healthy, just and sustainable food system as one of the 20 building blocks of a healthy city for all.

Urban Farm Types

The table below outlines the two types of urban farms that are permitted in the City of Vancouver, and the regulations for each type. Please note this is a summary of information available in the City's Urban Farm Guidelines, Zoning Bylaw, and License Bylaw. In the event of any discrepancies, the bylaws apply.

	Urban Farm Class A	Urban Farm Class B
Description	Small scale outdoor farms in residential zones. Usually located in front or backyards. May not be inside a residence/garage, or on a rooftop.	Small or large scale urban farms that may include structure-based farming such as vertical growing or greenhouse production.
Zoning District (where this farm type is permitted)	Residential Zones	Industrial, Commercial and Historical Area (Chinatown, Gastown, and Yaletown) Zones
Size Limit - Per parcel	Maximum planting area 325 m ² *	Maximum planting area 7000 m ² **
Size Limit - Combined area across all farm parcels	Maximum planting area 7000 m ²	Maximum planting area 7000 m ²
Farm Revenue Limits - If farmland is leased	None	None
Farm Revenue Limit - If farmland is owned	\$9,999 per organization or business	None
Business License	Business license required. \$10/year/farm parcel. One-time business license application fee (\$60) is waived for urban farms.	Business license required. \$155/year/farm parcel. One-time business license application fee (\$60) is waived for urban farms.
Development Permit	Not required*	Required (contact staff to discuss fee & process)
Building Permit and Structures	An accessory structure up to 10 m ² may be permitted without a building permit	Building permit required for structure-based farming (eg: indoor or , greenhouse production)
Farm gate sales	Only allowed if located on Institutional land	Allowed

* If the farm is on institutional land and demonstrates strong social impact, it may be approved for up to 7,000m². In this case, a development permit will be required.

**A larger size may be approved if the farm demonstrates strong social impact.

Starting an Urban Farm

For more information about how to start an urban farm, including applying for a business license and permits, and to review the Urban Farm Guidelines in full, please visit www.vancouver.ca/people-programs/growing-food-for-sale. We recommend that new applicants contact foodpolicy@vancouver.ca to discuss your business model before submitting an application.

Other types of Urban Agriculture

The City of Vancouver also has guidelines for keeping backyard chickens and honeybees as a hobby basis, and supports community gardens city-wide. For more information about these forms of urban agriculture, please visit www.vancouver.ca/people-programs/growing-food.