

Urban agriculture

Urban agriculture, urban farming, or urban gardening is defined as “the practice of cultivating, processing, and distributing food in or around a village, town, or city”.

In the UK there tend to be more rural CSAs than urban CSAs particularly because of the difficulty in finding enough suitable land in, or close to, urban areas. However, there are some good examples of urban or peri-urban CSAs such as Sims Hill in Bristol, Brighton Community Supported Agriculture - Fork and Dig It, and Riverside Market Garden in Cardiff.

One of the advantages of urban CSAs is that a lot of CSA members live in towns or cities, so these CSAs are nearer to a larger potential customer base. Some CSA members who live in urban areas may be more interested in actively helping out with growing on the farms if they are close by, as they are less likely to have their own gardens.

Many CSAs are based close to a large town or city like Canalside Community Food near Leamington Spa and Cambridge Cropshare. Although lots of their CSA members live in urban areas, they are often still within cycling distance of their CSA. CSA members who don't drive may find it very hard to get to more rural CSAs, especially if there's poor public transport.

CSAs enable urban dwellers to get out into the countryside on a regular basis to help out on the farm. This has great benefits for both their mental and physical health.

There are lots of urban agriculture projects around the UK. They may not regard themselves as CSAs

because they are not producing enough food to supply direct to members on a regular basis. Many urban growing projects focus more heavily on educational activities. They do not necessarily sell their produce but just give it to volunteers or use it in their own cookery activities.

Other community gardens only grow small amounts and either sell it at one-off events or supply it to restaurants on an ad-hoc basis. In practice if the community is supporting the project and is still connected to the farm, for instance through volunteering, then it would still meet the definition of a CSA in our charter.

communitysupportedagriculture.org.uk/about/csa-charter

Urban agriculture can also involve animal husbandry, aquaculture, agroforestry or bee keeping. There are many interesting city-based CSAs setting up to produce different types of food, particularly in Bristol. These include Street Goat, an urban micro dairy goat farm, streetgoat.co.uk and Bristol Fish Project, a community supported aquaponics farm bristolfish.org

Capital Growth supports growing projects in London and has lots of useful advice and resources relevant to urban agriculture all over the country capitalgrowth.org/

The Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens also provides significant support to community farms in urban areas farmgarden.org.uk/



What does
CSA mean
to you?

Eating seasonal
local produce
to reduce food
miles and
packaging