OPEN FOOD

VOLUME 2

COMMUNITY FOOD LAB

DESIGN. ADVOCACY. ENGAGEMENT.

landscape to table:

a guide to edible outdoor spaces





OPEN FOOD #2

COME Alive OUTSIDE®

EAT. PLAY. LEARN. RELAX. EXERCISE.
Come Alive Outside is a movement that inspires professional landscape companies to play a more active role in connecting people with the great outdoors. By helping them work with government and non-profit organizations, Come Alive Outside creates the awareness, intention and opportunity for people to live healthier lives outside.

When it comes to making landscapes more enticing and useful, there are few elements as engaging as food. Community Food Lab is proud to partner with Come Alive Outside, the North Carolina Green Industry Council, and Greenscape Inc. on the second OPEN FOOD booklet to make it easier for professional landscapers and their customers to understand how food plants can be incorporated into residential, corporate and urban landscapes.

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CompostNow
David and Katherine Freeman
Jane Norton
Sara Glee Queen
Charlie Queen

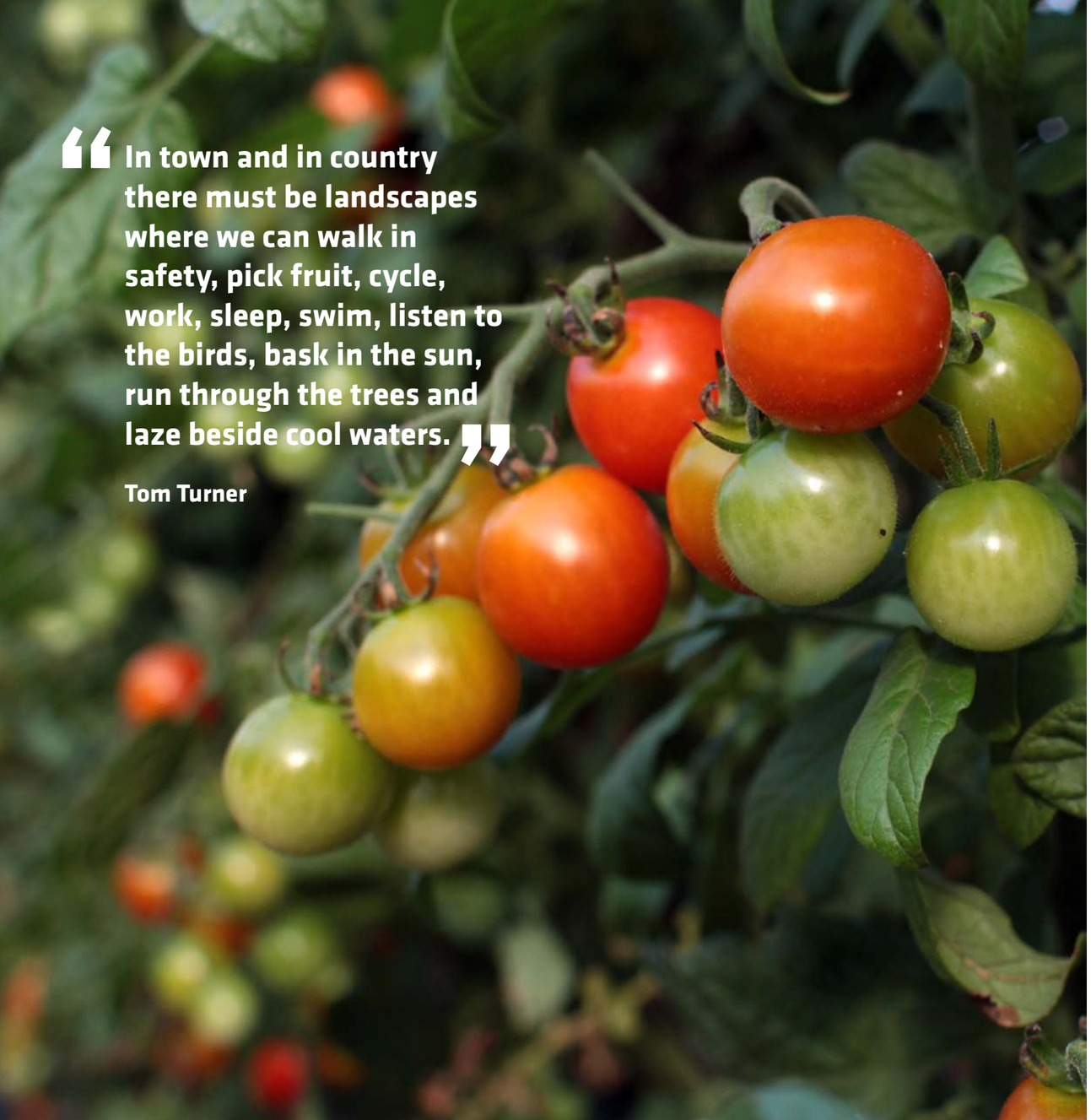
THIS BOOK IS ABOUT CHANGING HABITS

Landscapers have the ability to change the way people interact with their environment and with each other. Plant choices, maintenance plans, and conversing with landowners are all ways to connect landscape expertise with people's outdoor experiences.

One big way to make serious changes in people's outside habits? Bring edible plants into all kinds of landscapes. Incorporating edibles into landscapes encourages people to spend more time outside, to engage with the environment, to relax and to eat more healthy foods.

This booklet helps you to reimagine landscapes as fun, engaging, edible spaces that support human and environmental health. The following pages contain principles of edible landscape thinking along with examples of dynamic, edible landscapes to help you start spreading the edible word!

IT'S OK TO PLAY WITH YOUR FOOD



> **In town and in country there must be landscapes where we can walk in safety, pick fruit, cycle, work, sleep, swim, listen to the birds, bask in the sun, run through the trees and laze beside cool waters.**
>
> **Tom Turner**

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Principles of Edible Landscapes

#1 IDEA: PLANT EDIBLES!

This is where it starts, with the basic principle of edible landscapes: Just plant them! After you do that, it's easy to get hooked!

You'll be amazed at how simple it is to include plants that give you lots of benefits at the same time: food, beauty, habitat, and conversations with your neighbors or co-workers.

Don't get us wrong, though. Like any garden, your edible landscape will need care, attention, and love. You may find challenges in keeping some plants productive or picture-postcard pretty, but once you find yourself outside more and eating fresh food you grew yourself those challenges are easy to work through.

COME ALIVE OUTSIDE

Go plant something! Pick something! Or just meditate on watching something grow! Once you start conneting with your lansdcape around food, it is hard not to want to be outside.

BE HEALTHY

Spending time relaxing and restoring outdoors helps increase cognitive performance, decrease depression, alleviate stress, lower heart rate and even dissipate muscle tension!

EAT FRESH

Eating fresh, healthy food is great for you but it's not always easy or convenient. When food is growing all around you, making healthy choices for you and your family is easy.

CHOOSE
Tasty Plants

There are an incredible variety of edible plants available in all of our growing regions. To stay excited about new edibles in your landscape, choose varieties that you like to eat!

When your tasty peaches or berries or tomatoes start to ripen, you'll be outside all the time!

LOCATE
Near People

Think about where people are likely to be, like a shady yard, a comfortable bench, or a kids' play area.

Working edibles into those areas ensures the food gets eaten and reinforces the outdoor activities.

See page 12 for more information.

SUBSTITUTE
Edibles

Swap it out!

There are lots of edibles that can match the aesthetic or functional qualities of non-edibles. Swapping an ornamental plant for an edible plant can be an easy task that doesn't require an overhaul of your whole landscape.

RECYCLE
Nutrients

Composting, cover cropping and water collection are great ways to save resources and recycle nutrients within your landscape, no matter what you're growing.

Think about ecosystems, soil health, and being efficient and self-sufficient whenever you can. Your food will taste better, you'll save money, and you'll be an active part of your landscape.

ATTRACT
Beneficial Insects

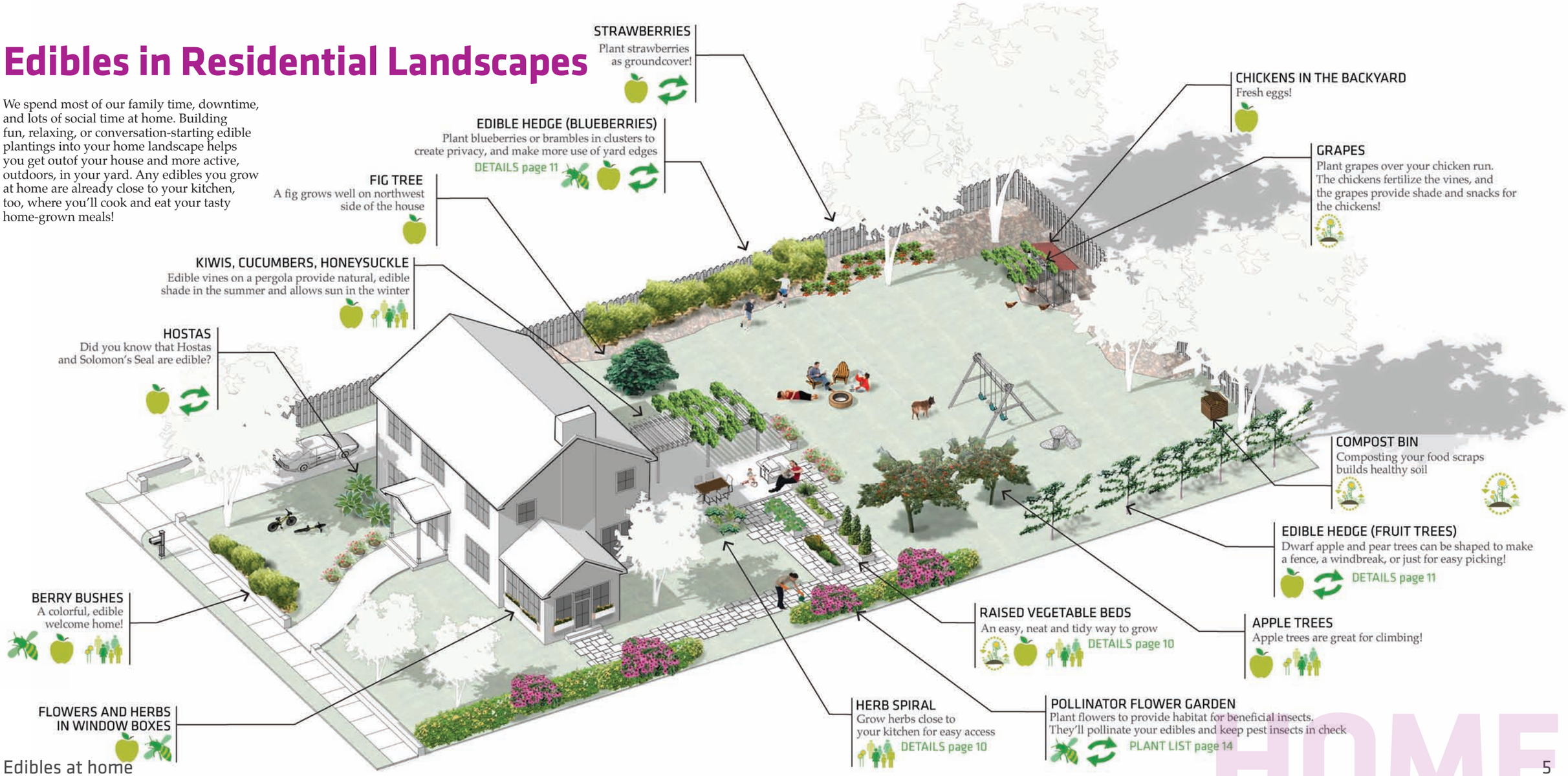
Beautiful flowering plants can attract bees, butterflies, birds and other beneficial insects. All this wildlife helps keep pests in check, enriches the health of soil and native plants. Without them, lots of edibles just couldn't produce!

See page 13 for a list of pollinator-attracting plants.

PRINCIPLES

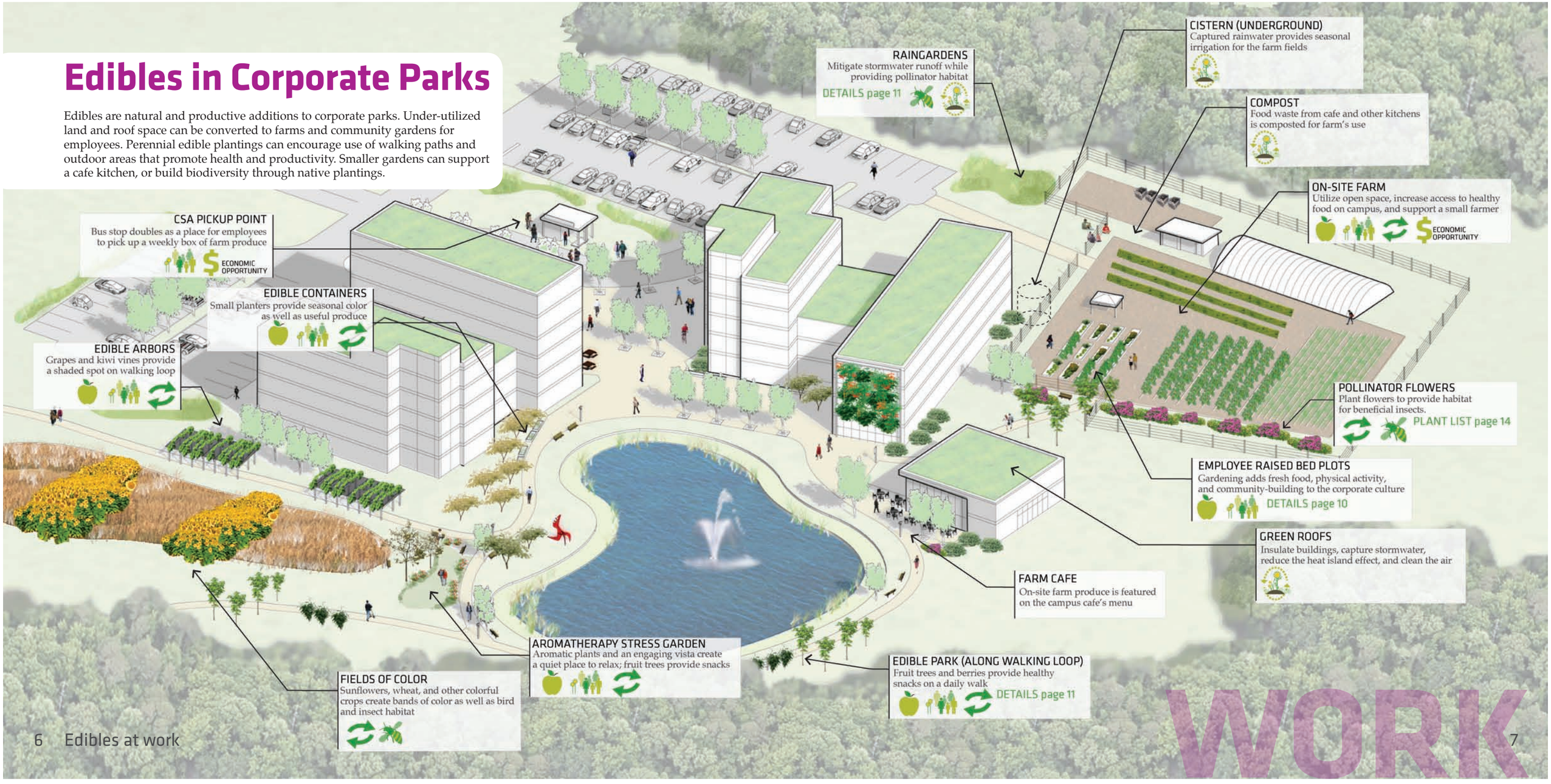
Edibles in Residential Landscapes

We spend most of our family time, downtime, and lots of social time at home. Building fun, relaxing, or conversation-starting edible plantings into your home landscape helps you get outof your house and more active, outdoors, in your yard. Any edibles you grow at home are already close to your kitchen, too, where you'll cook and eat your tasty home-grown meals!



Edibles in Corporate Parks

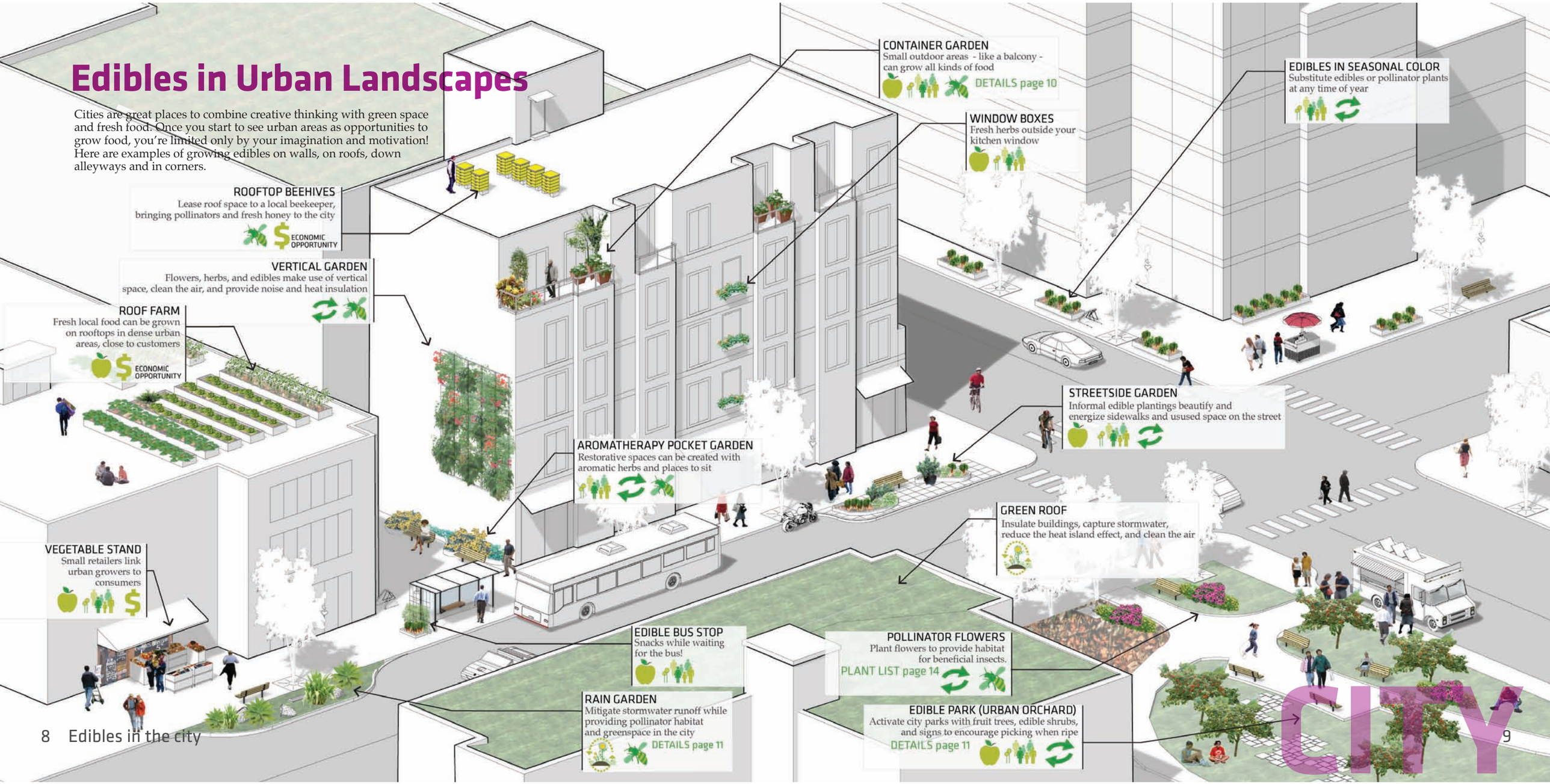
Edibles are natural and productive additions to corporate parks. Under-utilized land and roof space can be converted to farms and community gardens for employees. Perennial edible plantings can encourage use of walking paths and outdoor areas that promote health and productivity. Smaller gardens can support a cafe kitchen, or build biodiversity through native plantings.



WORK

Edibles in Urban Landscapes

Cities are great places to combine creative thinking with green space and fresh food. Once you start to see urban areas as opportunities to grow food, you're limited only by your imagination and motivation! Here are examples of growing edibles on walls, on roofs, down alleyways and in corners.



Edibles in Detail

We've shown you a number of examples of how edibles fit into different landscapes. Hopefully you've seen that the possibilities are limited only by your imagination!

Now have a look at some examples up close!


Photo by Erin White

CONTAINER GARDENING

Containers aren't just for ornamentals! Grow rainbow chard, kale, mustard greens and collards for winter and spring; try cabbage, carrots and beets in the summer and fall for decorative, delicious containers.


Photo by Will Hooker

RAISED BEDS

Raised beds are planted areas of soil often enclosed in spaces formed from wood or concerete that are raised above the existing surface layer of soil. They are a great way to grow a lot of food in a small space. To ensure access to the food you've planted, make sure to build raised beds no more than four feet across so that you can always reach your food from any side. Raised beds can easily be tailored for special needs.


Photo by Katherine Hoke

HERB SPIRAL

An herb spiral is a coil of about 30 linear feet in the shape of a helix about 5 feet across. This space-saving planter creates a visual interest around edible landscaping. An herb spiral creates several microclimates by planting herbs according to their sun and water needs. Most water-loving or shade-tolerant plants, like coriander and parsley? Plant near the bottom. Herbs that thrive in full sun, and need less water, like rosemary and dill? These go at the top.


Photo by Will Hooker

EDIBLE HEDGES

Define yard edges with bramble or berry hedges, or try a Belgian fence out of dwarf apple or pear trees. This traditional nethod of growing apple or pear trees can be labor intensive but is a beautiful way to yield a lot of fruit in a small space. Shade loving greens or flowers grown under the fence provide additional privacy. Edible hedges and fences both act as attractive screens, make efficient use of space, and help to make harvesting easier.


Photo by Katherine Hoke

RAIN GARDEN

A rain garden is a planted depression that captures storm water runoff. Rain gardens are beautiful ways to increase infiltration, filter storm water, reduce storm drain overload, decrease flooding, and attract pollinators. Soil should be close to a loamy sand and rich in organic matter to encourage infiltration. Use hardy plants that withstand flooding and drought, are low maintenance, and provide food for pollinators.


Photo by Terry Richardson

LIVING WALLS

A living wall covers a vertical surface with growing plants. Use plants with shallow roots or change the plantings by the season.We recommend fragrant herbs, lettuces, and shallow rooted pollinator attracting plants.


Photo by Katherine Hoke

EDIBLE PARK

Edible parks bring new dimensions in health and wellness to corporate parks and valuable multi-functional space to urban settings. In these spaces people can enjoy a healthy snack during work breaks and restore their attention capacity. Edible parks are great places for informal meetings or family picnics. Plant edible trees and shrubs, pollinator attracting plants, and provide pathways.

Guiding New Habits

CHOOSE TASTY PLANTS
How Much Does Your Garden Grow?

1 mature highbush **blueberry bush** =
10 pounds of fruit/year (6)
1 tomato plant =
8 pounds of fruit (7)
1 slicing **cucumber plant** =
10 6-ounce cucumbers (8)
1 basil plant =
7 cups of leaves (9)
1 standard **apple tree** =
4-5 bushels of apples per year (10)

Production will depend on a variety of factors including soil fertility and the amount of sunlight and water they receive.

LOCATE NEAR PEOPLE
Permaculture Zones

Zone planting is the idea that plants used most often, or that need the most maintenance, should be planted closest to your areas of high activity. The idea comes from permaculture, a broad school of thought that looks at plants and humans and nature as part of connected systems.

By thinking about the system of a landscape as a series of concentric zones, you can decide where to plant your everyday herbs and lettuces, your occasional carrots, and your seasonal apples!

Photo by flickr user naturalflow, CC 2.0

SUBSTITUTE EDIBLES
Soil Testing

Before you jump into planting edibles in your garden's soil, ***get your soil tested!***

Soil tests are necessary for determining the nutrient availability in the soil and what needs to be added to grow food. This saves money on unecessary nutrient applications and reduces nutrient runoff by overapplication. Soil tests can also determine if contamination is present thta you need to plan around, which is especially important on urban soils.

For more information on soil testing in your area, visit your state cooperative extension service webpage.

RECYCLE NUTRIENTS
Composting

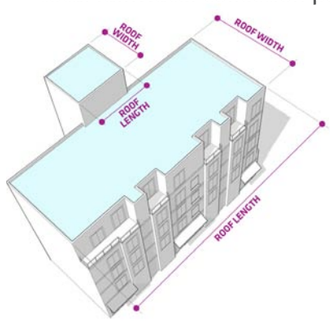
Want to build healthy soil and grow great food?

Composting is a simple way to turn your food scraps into healthy soil amendment for plants. Build or buy a containing structure and make sure to have a proper carbon to nitrogen ratio as well as enough heat to break down the waste.

RECYCLE NUTRIENTS
Rainwater Harvesting

While not technically a nutrient, water is a resource that we can use wisely. Here is a simple way to calculate your collection potential.

length of roof (feet)
x width of roof (feet)
x 0.6 (conversion factor)
x average annual rainfall of your area (inches)
= total rainwater collection per year (inches)



Guiding New Habits

ATTRACT BENEFICIAL INSECTS
Suggested Pollinator Plants

Throughout this booklet we talk about pollinator gardens and the importance of beneficial insects in your landscape.

Just in case you aren't sure where to start, here is a short list of plants that attract pollinators. Make sure you have something flowering for them every season of the year!

PERENNIALS

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	FLOWERING TIME
Agastache foeniculum	Anise Hyssop	Summer-frost
Aster sp.	Aster	Summer-Fall
Echinacea purpurea	Purple coneflower	Summer-Fall
Eurybia divaricata	Wood aster	Fall
Hellebore sp.	Lenten rose, Hellebore	Winter-Spring
Lantana camara	Lantana	Summer-frost
Rudbeckia sp.	Brown eyed Susan	Summer-Fall
Salvia sp.	Salvia/Sage	Summer-frost
Taraxacum officinale	Dandelion	Spring-frost
Trifolium repens	White clover	Spring-frost

ANNUALS

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	FLOWERING TIME
Brassica sp.	Cabbage family, including kale	Early Spring
Eschscholzia californica	California poppy	Spring-early Summer
Helianthus annuus	Annual sunflower	Summer (resow)
Viola sp.	Viola/Pansy	Winter-Spring
Zinnia sp.	Zinnias	Summer

PERENNIAL HERBS

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	FLOWERING TIME
Calamintha nepeta	Catmint	Spring-frost
Lavandula sp.	Lavender	Spring
Melissa officinalis	Lemon balm	Spring-Summer
Origanum sp.	Oregano	Summer-Fall

ANNUAL + BIENNIAL HERBS

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	FLOWERING TIME
Basil sp.	Basil	Summer-frost
Borago officinalis	Borage	Spring
Petroselinum crispum	Parsley	Summer

TREES + SHRUBS

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	FLOWERING TIME
Buddleia sp.	Butterfly bush	Summer-frost
Cercis canadensis	Redbud	Spring
Edgeworthia chrysantha	Paperbush	Winter-early Spring
Liriodendron tulipifera	Tulip Poplar	Spring
Prunus caroliniana	Cherry laurel	Late Winter
Rhododendron sp.	Azaleas	Spring
Salix discolor	Pussy willow	Late Winter-Early Spring
Sarcococca sp.	Christmas box	Winter
Vaccinium sp.	Blueberries	Spring

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

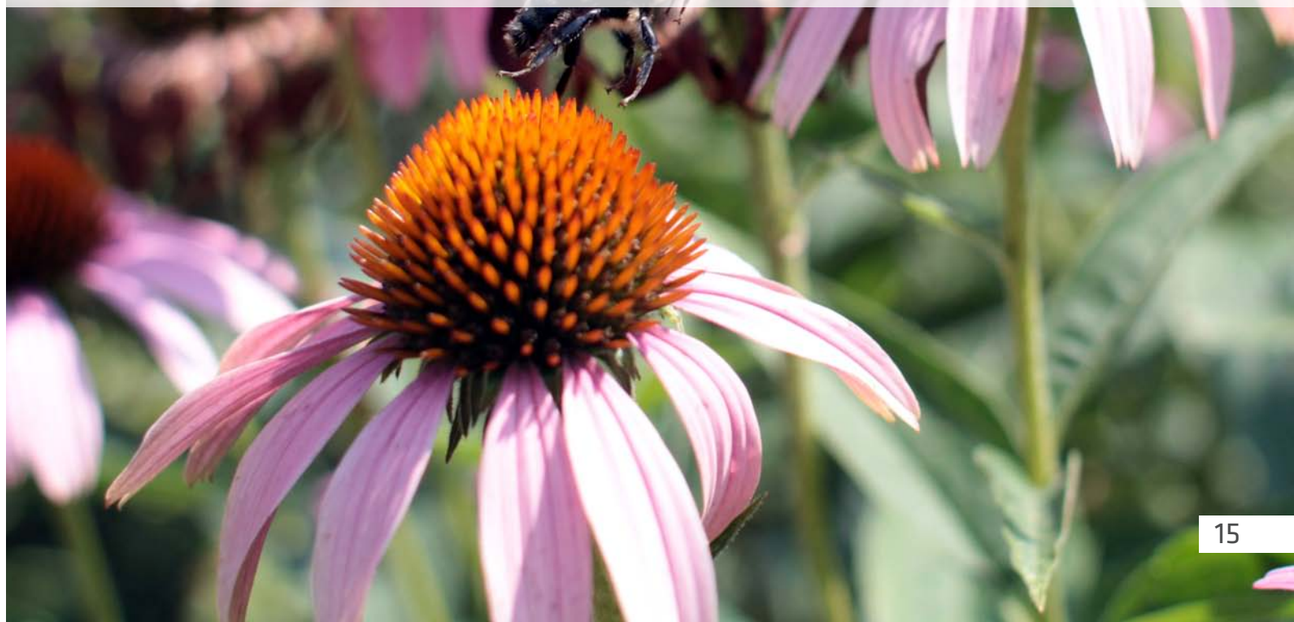
COME ALIVE OUTSIDE RESOURCES
comealiveoutside.com

NC SPRING PLANTING GUIDE:
http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hortconsumer/quickref/vegetableplantingguide

NC FALL PLANTING GUIDE:
http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/consumerquickref/vegetable/fall_planting_guide. html

FOR SOIL TESTING IN NC:
http://www.ncagr.gov/agronomi/uyrst.htm

A GUIDE TO COMPOSTING:
http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/hil/pdf/ag-467.pdf



Community Food Lab is a design and consulting firm working to build local food systems. We are designers, collaborators, and systems thinkers working for healthy, inclusive, and equitable food systems. We are always looking for opportunities to add new value to the health, economy and sustainability of communities.

OPEN FOOD is a Community Food Lab project to build participation in local food. This series of single topic booklets introduces, explains and shares various parts of local food systems, and offers everyone an invitation to get involved. Meant to make local food open and accessible, the OPEN FOOD series will be distributed widely in print and digital form.

[Order more booklets and find free pdf downloads at communityfoodlab.org]