

# Homegrown Baltimore: Grow Local Resources List *(updated 2022)*

## Urban Farms

### **Baltimore Office of Sustainability**

The City of Baltimore's Office of Sustainability has compiled resources for urban farmers including information on the city's land leasing program for farms on city-owned properties, a local tax credit for farmers, guidance and regulations related to assessing soil safety for food grown for human consumption, references to rules and regulations for areas such as permitting, zoning, and the keeping of farm animals, reports on issues like flower farming and rainwater harvesting, and more.

<http://www.baltimoresustainability.org/projects/baltimore-food-policy-initiative/homegrown-baltimore/urban-agriculture-2/>.

### **Black Yield Institute**

Black Yield Institute (BYI) is a Pan-African power institution based in Baltimore, Maryland, serving as a think tank and collective action network that addresses food apartheid. In addition to growing food and running markets, BYI has put out reports and media content in many different formats exploring issues of food, land, and justice, held trainings, celebrations, and conversations around these topics with community members, and serves as a leader in the local food justice movement.

<https://blackyieldinstitute.org/>

### **Civic Works' Real Food Farm**

Civic Works, a long-running non-profit service corps for Baltimore City, started Real Food Farm in 2009. One of the primary missions of the farm is to develop an economically viable, environmentally responsible local agriculture sector. To achieve this goal, Real Food Farm trains youth and adults in agricultural and horticultural jobs, creates employment opportunities for Baltimore City residents on the farm, hosts festivals and trainings boosting the urban agriculture movement, hosts field trips and tours for youth and adults interested in learning about urban agriculture, and freely shares information on composting, soil testing, stormwater management, and production methods with other city farmers.

<http://realfoodfarm.civicworks.com/>

### **Community Law Center's Urban Agriculture Law Project**

The Community Law Center provides legal counsel to community organizations, and also ran the Urban Agriculture Law Project, which includes a blog and an online manual.

The manual and blog help to explain complex legal concepts that affect urban agriculture in terms that anyone can understand. While the project has now ended, much of the information compiled is still very useful – you can find the manual under “Publications” on the Community Law Center website.

<http://communitylaw.org/urbanagriculturelawproject/>

### **Farm Alliance of Baltimore**

Formed in 2012, the Farm Alliance of Baltimore is a network of food producers working to increase the viability of urban farming and improve access to urban grown foods. Current efforts of the Farm Alliance include a shared credit/debit/EBT machine, running joint sales to restaurants, operating a shared farmers market stand, increasing urban the resources and information available to urban farmers, and building a shared brand. The Farm Alliance launched the Black Butterfly Urban Farmer Academy in 2021 at a new 6-acre farm incubator site in south Baltimore.

<http://farmalliancebaltimore.org/>

### **Farm Service Agency’s Microloans Program**

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) administers and manages farm commodity, credit, conservation, disaster, and loan programs as laid out by Congress through a network of federal, state and county offices. In 2013, FSA launched a new Microloan program to serve the unique financial operating needs of beginning, niche and the smallest of family farm operations by modifying its Operating Loan application, eligibility and security requirements. The program is designed to offer more flexible access to credit, especially for niche farmers such as specialty crop producers and operators of community supported agriculture enterprises. Loans are for \$35,000 or less and can be used for everything from seeds and supplies to building hoop houses, but may not be used to purchase real estate. While this program is very new, it has already disbursed over \$30 million in loans and is expected to be a resource for Baltimore’s urban farmers who have some experience farming, do not have major financial or credit problems and do not otherwise have access to commercial agricultural loans.

<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-loan-programs/microloans/index>

### **Future Harvest**

Future Harvest, also known as the Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture, is a regional network aiming to advance agriculture that sustains farmers, communities, and the environment. In addition to an annual conference and other events, Future Harvest hosts a Beginner Farmer Training Program each year to provide education, experience, and mini-grants to aspiring farmers, which includes a workshop series on urban farming held in Baltimore City. Future Harvest now also offers a Sustainable Urban Agriculture certification.

<https://www.futureharvest.org/>

### **Marbidco's Urban Agriculture Lending Incentive Grant**

The Maryland Agricultural & Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation, or Marbidco, is a quasi-public agency designed to enhance the profitability of Maryland's agricultural sector. Marbidco runs the Urban Agriculture Commercial Lending Incentive Grant, which offers matching grants of \$1,000-\$7,500 to supplement commercial loans. This unique program is designed to encourage commercial urban farmers to access private lending when they might otherwise not be able, or not feel secure enough to do so.

[https://www.marbidco.org/pages/programs\\_grants/grant\\_programs\\_muaclig.htm](https://www.marbidco.org/pages/programs_grants/grant_programs_muaclig.htm)

### **Maryland Department of Agriculture Small Farm & Urban Agriculture Program**

Newly launched in 2022, and with more offerings on the way in 2023, this state-run program provides funding and technical support to small and urban farms across the state.

[https://mda.maryland.gov/resource\\_conservation/Pages/Small-Farm-and-UrbanAgricultureProgram.aspx](https://mda.maryland.gov/resource_conservation/Pages/Small-Farm-and-UrbanAgricultureProgram.aspx)

### **Mid-Atlantic Farm Credit**

Mid-Atlantic Farm Credit, a member of the nationwide Farm Credit Network of customer-owned lending institutions, offers scholarships for individuals studying agriculture, a kit of resources for new farmers, and low interest farm loans.

<https://www.maafc.com/services/beginning-farmers>

### **Natural Resources Conservation Service – Baltimore County**

The Baltimore County Soil Conservation District hosts a District Conservationist employed by the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, who works with farms both in Baltimore County and in Baltimore City to help them develop free Soil Conservation & Water Quality Plans, as well as support growers in accessing state and federal incentive programs that will cover much of the cost of practices designed to support soil conservation and water quality, such as drip irrigation, hoop houses, and cover crops.

<https://www.bcscd.org/conservation-plans>

## **Community & School Gardens**

### **Black Church Food Security Network**

The Black Church Food Security Network, which was founded in and is based in Baltimore, helps Black churches use their assets to establish gardens on their land, host miniature farmers' markets, and buy wholesale from Black farmers. The network has now grown far beyond Maryland, but maintains a regional Baltimore Metro Coordinator position.

<https://blackchurchfoodsecurity.net/>

### **City Farms Program**

Started in 1978, Baltimore City Farms is a Recreation and Parks program that offers garden plots for rent to Baltimore residents. Plots are located in 11 city parks including: Carroll, Clifton, Dewees, Druid Hill, Cimaglia, Leakin, Patterson, Roosevelt, Light Street, Heath Street, and Rockrose Park. Most plots offer about 150 square feet of gardening space and rent for \$30 per year. The gardener also pays a one-time key fee of \$10, which gives access to a fenced and locked garden. All City Farms gardens have city water and hoses and wheelbarrows for use by gardeners. Wood chips and manure are also provided. The program is open to any city resident, with experienced gardeners mentoring novice gardeners.

<https://bcrp.baltimorecity.gov/special-programs/farms>

### **Great Kids Farm**

Started in 2008 by the Baltimore City public school system, Great Kids Farm (GKF) is a 33-acre farm in Baltimore County that acts as an educational resource campus for Baltimore City school children. GKF and its staff of Farm to School educators host field trips, visit schools, provide technical assistance and material support for schoolyard gardening programs, and has created an amazing Schoolyard Gardening Toolkit.

<https://www.baltimorecityschools.org/great-kids-farm>

## **Trees & Orchards**

### **Baltimore Orchard Project**

The Baltimore Orchard Project is made up of a diverse group of people who have joined together to plant, grow, glean and share fruit throughout the neighborhoods of Baltimore. They have two main goals. The first is gleaning fruit from existing fruit trees that would otherwise go to waste and distributing it to those in need. The second is partnering with individuals and organizations in Baltimore to plant fruit trees, orchards and —food forests for the benefit of the community. The project has harvested and distributed thousands of pounds of food and planted hundreds of fruit trees in the city limits.

<https://www.baltimoreorchardproject.org/>

### **TreeBaltimore Initiative**

TreeBaltimore is a mayoral initiative spearheaded by the Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks. This program strives to increase the urban tree canopy through the establishment, management and preservation of trees. Activities include tree planting and care of existing trees. Residents and neighborhood associations are also eligible for tree giveaways and discounts on tree purchases. Fruit trees for public spaces, such as at schools, in community gardens, or in parks, are available for free through the initiative to those who are willing to commit to their care (which can be intensive), as is assistance with planting.

<http://treebaltimore.org/>

## **Additional Resources & Information**

### **Adopt-a-Lot & Water Access Programs**

The Baltimore City Department of Housing provides community members with permission for beautification projects (including gardening) on city-owned vacant lots via the Adopt-A-Lot program. You can also apply through this program for access to city water, if available, for any garden or farm project that's open to the community for a flat rate of \$120/year.

<https://buyintobmore.baltimorecity.gov/>

### **Baltimore Community Foundation**

The Baltimore Community Foundation is a philanthropic foundation that offers funding in categories including Schools and Neighborhoods. Find their full offerings at:

<http://www.bcf.org/>

### **The Baltimore Community ToolBank**

The Baltimore Community Toolbank offers an inventory of tools — shovels, rakes, drills, wheelbarrows, and much more — for a nominal fee to help nonprofit organizations, religious and educational institutions, community groups, and their volunteers achieve success in their projects.

<http://baltimore.toolbank.org/>

### **Baltimore Green Space**

Baltimore Green Space is a nonprofit land trust that partners with communities to preserve and support community gardens, pocket parks, forest patches, and other community-managed open spaces. To become a member of the land trust, community gardens and other community-managed open spaces must benefit a neighborhood by contributing to community life and environmental improvement, have long-term viability, and demonstrate adequate environmental quality. In addition, the land must be owned by the City of Baltimore (which sells qualifying sites to the land trust for \$1) or be donated to the land trust by the landowner. Baltimore Green Space has also played a leading role in local policy issues.

<http://baltimoregreenspace.org/>

### **Chesapeake Bay Trust**

The Chesapeake Bay Trust is a non-profit grant-making organization that aims to increase stewardship through grant programs, special initiatives, and partnerships that support environmental education, demonstration-based restoration, and community engagement activities. The Chesapeake Bay Trust funds grants for projects that focus on environmental education, demonstration-based restoration, and community engagement.

<http://www.cbtrust.org>

### **CodeMap**

If you wish to know who owns a piece of land, even if you don't know the address, you can find the information on CodeMap, a free resource from the Baltimore City Department of Housing & Community Development. Just zoom in on the map to the property you're looking at and click on it to see ownership and other information.

<https://cels.baltimorehousing.org/codemapv2/>

### **JHU Center for a Livable Future**

The Center for a Livable Future (CLF) is a project of Johns Hopkins University's Bloomberg School of Public Health. CLF does a great deal of work around food and farming policy, including studying urban agriculture in Baltimore City. Their premiere resource for urban growers is the Safe Urban Harvests Study, which studied the soil and produce at over 100 Baltimore City gardens and farms over the course of years, finding that they were overwhelmingly safe and healthy, with no instances of sites growing produce with unsafe levels of heavy metals. CLF has also compiled a number of resources for urban growers, including on soil safety and grants.

<https://clf.jhsph.edu/projects/urban-agriculture/safe-urban-harvests-study>

### **The Loading Dock**

The Loading Dock (2 North Kresson Street, 21224) is a building materials reuse facility that aims to increase the supply and use of affordable building materials for housing and community improvement. The Loading Dock sells salvaged surplus building materials that are otherwise headed for landfills. You may be able to find lumber or fencing materials.

[www.loadingdock.org](http://www.loadingdock.org)

### **MISS Utility**

MISS Utility is a public service that marks underground utilities call before you dig so you don't damage gas and other utility lines, or yourself. In Baltimore there can be a charge. It is highly recommended you call MISS Utility before any digging on a vacant lot or park.

<http://www.missutility.net/>

### **Neighborhood Design Center**

The Neighborhood Design Center utilizes landscape and architectural planning to improve neighborhood livability, viability and sustainability by providing pro-bono design and planning services in support of community-sponsored initiatives. Neighborhood Design Center partners volunteer architects, planners, landscape architects, engineers, and other design professionals with community members to achieve neighborhood revitalization.

[www.ndc-md.org](http://www.ndc-md.org)

### **Second Chance**

Second Chance is a nonprofit that deconstructs buildings and homes, salvage usable materials and make those available to the public. At Second Chance (1645 Warner St, 21230) you may be able to find fencing, heavy duty outdoor planters, and outdoor art like sculptures and birdbaths. They also often have bricks, pavers, and lumber.

[www.secondchanceinc.org](http://www.secondchanceinc.org)

### **University of Maryland Extension**

The Master Gardener program at the University of Maryland Extension (UME) aims to educate residents about safe, effective and sustainable horticultural practices. It started in 1978 and is now present across Maryland, including Baltimore City. The program trains volunteer horticultural educators called Master Gardeners who receive extensive training and then work in their communities to teach Marylanders how to cultivate garden spaces and manage landscapes sustainably. Master Gardeners work on a range of activities, including offering community gardening, youth gardening, and composting classes. In addition, UME has a focus on urban farming with an Urban Agricultural agent on staff, offers resources and trainings focused on entrepreneurial agriculture in several Baltimore City neighborhoods, and also works with youth gardens.

<http://extension.umd.edu/>