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"To me, a building – if it's beautiful –  
is the love of one man; he's made it out of his  
love for space, materials, things like that"  
– Martha Graham

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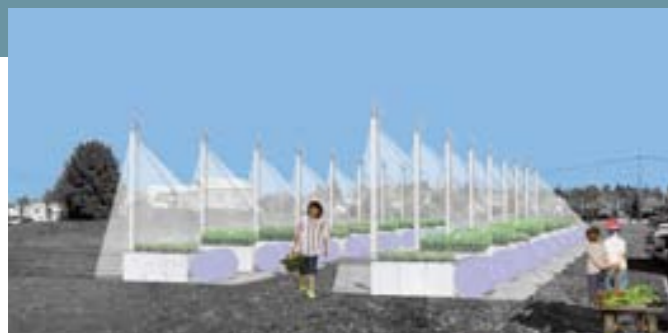
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# Looking at cities through the lens of food

From the poorest to the richest neighbourhoods in the US, urban agriculture is becoming *de rigueur*

TEXT: NICHOLE L REBER  
PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY OF ATELIERJONES



When her family stepped into the White House, First Lady Michelle Obama espoused a timely, multi-faceted issue by embracing home gardens, returning to a World War II practice in North America and Europe known as Victory Gardens. Throw in global warming, a rocky economy, and rising obesity and a full-scale urban agriculture trend sprouts nationwide.

While the phrase 'urban agriculture' is still,

to the common household, considered analogous to food coops and low-income vocational practices, it has indeed evolved. Denizens are successfully convincing municipal leaders to change zoning. They're stocking restaurants with locally-grown produce, perpetuating sustainable dietary and agricultural practices in children via outdoor gardening programmes in schools, and gaining supplemental income.

In Washington state, Seattle-based architecture firm Atelierjones is developing inexpensive, immediately deployable urban greenhouses that will allow for mini farms to sprout up throughout the city, minimally impacting the land, requiring no digging or soil clean up, and offering easy relocation.

These 45 sq-ft urban greenhouses, estimated to cost US\$435 each, will allow homeowners, restaurateurs and schools to seemingly extend farming seasons. Each greenhouse harvests rainwater and enough solar energy to power a growlight that also works as an auxiliary heat source. Installation consists of connecting the hoses between the fabric gutters and the water cistern, installing the solar grow light and solar panel, and filling growth bags with soil and seeds.



自耕自足  
無論是在美國最貧困還是最富有的社區，都市農耕都變得與城市密不可分

撰文：NICHOLE L REBER  
攝影：ATELIERJONES提供

The firm wants to expand this early programme around the city. It's in the prototype phase of a project with a local elementary school in which 18 greenhouses on an empty lot adjacent to the school will provide produce for school lunches. "The kids won't be there during the primary growing season of summer, so they can plant winter crops and harvest colder-weather produce and then plant again in February to get one more crop by June, when school gets out," says Susan H Jones, founder and principal of Atelierjones.

A couple years ago, she met with Andrea Petzel, then of the Seattle's department of planning and development as part of the city council's local food action initiative. "The president set up a big initiative for all city departments and how they touched food policy. We looked for barriers to urban agriculture, how to integrate urban agriculture in our emergency management plan, how to make more land spaces available," says Petzel, now in Seattle's office of sustainability and environment.

"To develop a new piece of code we met with code-compliance people, plan review people, the department of neighbourhoods, and the planning and development department. We also met with community groups and individuals. That's how I met Susan. She brought up issues that were important to a larger group of people. It even related to department of neighbourhoods which has community gardens and some rooftop gardens."

The result expanded land-use codes beyond horticulture, animal husbandry, and aquaculture, by allowing permit-free urban farms of up to 4,000 sq-ft of planting area, for rooftop gardens higher than the original height restriction of 15ft, and for vertical gardens.

"We just passed the legislation in the summer of 2010 and therefore missed the big growing season, but we're curious to see how it turns out this year. I've sat in on meetings with projects who wanted to incorporate community gardens into their new developments. The City of Seattle went this way because we're zoned almost 60 per cent single-family. The biggest opportunities are in people's backyards. We allow that in single-family zones, allowing light commercial elements in their zones now."

當奧巴馬入主白宮時，第一夫人米歇爾把家園花園一併帶進去，就像是二次大戰時期在北美與歐洲盛行的「勝利花園」，以行動帶頭支持推行時機日漸成熟的多用途家庭菜園。在全球暖化、經濟低迷及肥胖問題日益嚴重的情況下，都市農耕牽動美國，熱潮席捲全國。

一般家庭來說，「都市農耕」一詞仍然等同食物合作社，是低收入人士才需要的。不過，都市農耕已演進，居民成功說服市政官員改變土地的用途。他們為餐廳提供本地栽種的新鮮農作物，透過學校的戶外園藝計劃讓孩子養成健康持久的飲食習慣及種植習慣，從而賺取額外的收入。

在華盛頓，西雅圖建築事務所 Atelierjones 正開發易於組裝的廉宜都市溫室，讓迷你農場迅速蔓延全城。這些都市溫室對土地的影響微小，又無需挖土整地，要移動溫室亦相當簡單快捷。

四十五平方呎的都市溫室只售四百三十五美元，為屋主、餐廳老闆及學校延長耕作期。每間溫室都收集雨水與太陽能，電量足夠一盞植物生長燈所用，而植物生長燈亦可當作額外的供電源頭。溫室的安裝簡單，先在布幕與水櫃之間連接喉管，裝上太陽能燈與太陽能板，然後把植物袋裝滿泥土，再放入種子便成。

Atelierjones 想將這個前期項目擴展到全城。設計原型源自一個與當地小學合作的項目，在學校隔鄰的一片空地中建造十八間溫室，栽種植物為學校供應午餐。Atelierjones 創辦人兼首席建築師 Susan H Jones 說：「夏天的主耕作期時學生都不會在學校，所以他們可以種些冬季農作物，在較冷的日子收割，然後在二月又可以再種植等六月收成，然後就剛好放假。」

數年前，Susan 認識了當時任職西雅圖規劃發展局而有份參與市政府當地一項糧食倡議行動的 Andrea Petzel。Andrea 現於西雅圖可持續發展與環境辦公室工作，憶述說：「當時總統為所有城市的部門訂定規模龐大的倡議和食物政策相關的建議。我們找出推行都市農耕會遇到的障礙，探討如何能夠把都市農耕融入緊急管理計劃之中，並研究如何能增加可用作都市農耕的土地。」

他續說：「為了訂定全新的規例，我們與執法人士、計劃評審人士、社區部門及規劃發展局的人員會面。我們又與地區組織及個別人士會面，因此而認識了 Susan。她提出一些對更大群體來說是很重要的問題，甚至涉及那些有社區花園與天台花園的社區的相關部門。」

結果，擴充後的土地用途條例遠超園藝、畜牧與水栽種植的層面，同時批出高達四千平方呎的特許都市農耕地，用作高度可比的原有限制的五呎還要高的天台花園，應用更擴展至垂直花園。

Andrea 說：「我們於二零一零年夏天才通過立法，剛好錯過了夏季的耕作高峰期，但我們仍期待看到今年的成果。我出席旁聽了不少想在新發展項目中加入社區花園的建築項目會議。西雅圖市會朝這個方向走，是因為我們六成土地都是單一家庭的住宅用地，而最大的機會便潛藏於他們的後院之中。我們准許單一家庭的區域加上農地，容許他們在住宅用途的土地上加上許許多商業元素。」