

Farmers on Bikes Use Neighborhood Lawns to Grow Food, And You Can Too

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Here's how to use other people's land for organic garden plots, and get bike-riding farmers to help from harvest to market.

Several years ago 27-year old Chris Castro took a look around his hometown and realized that most of Orlando's suburban yards were doing little more than devouring water. So he hatched a plan based on a concept brought to a community sustainability meeting by urban farmer John Rife.

In 2014 Castro and his friend Heather Grove started a non-profit bike-powered urban farming program, [Fleet Farming](#), to use domestic lawns to grow organic produce and bring it to market. It's kind of a garden-sharing plan, in which homeowners allow the use of their land which is tended to and harvested by (bike-riding!) volunteers. The homeowners get a share in the harvest or the market profit, and have a nice garden without the work; Fleet Farming gets produce to sell and shoppers get local produce to buy. It's a win-win ... with a few extra wins in there.

"I just wanted to connect people to fresh, local, organic produce, which was surprisingly hard to do here," says Castro.

After signing up more than 200 yards in a year and a half, the team started a sister program, Fleet Fruits, in which residents register fruit trees that the bike-riding farmers tend to and harvest.

And while this isn't the first urban farming project of its kind – it's actually based on a project developed by Curtis Stone in British Columbia, Canada – Grove [says](#) that the Orlando group has "tweaked Stone's design a bit to make Fleet Farming even more sustainable, adding the bicycle brigade and using more permaculture techniques."

Since the launch of Fleet Farming, people are catching on and the model has been brought to life in other communities – and with that in mind Fleet Farming began offering a \$75 [Tool Kit](#) which is a complete guide to starting your own bike-powered urban farming program. And of course you might think, why do I need to spend \$75 on a kit? Well aside from the branding and success stories which might make it an easier sell to homeowners, the resource-heavy kit includes the business model, legal forms and waivers, administrative details, growing methods, processing logistics, sales tactics, a one-hour consultation with a Fleet Farming Program Coordinator and more. And all profits go to expanding the initiative.

You can see more about the program here:

Click here to watch "Fleet Farming": <https://youtu.be/JqE2kx1diYE>

Via [Modern Farmer](#)
