

# The Urban Farm



Dept. of Landscape Architecture  
University of Oregon  
Summer 2013  
LA 390 • CRN: 41301  
4 Credits, Harper Keeler

“A person who undertakes to grow a garden at home, by practices that will preserve rather than exploit the economy of the soil, has his mind precisely against what is wrong with us....What I am saying is that if we apply our minds directly and competently to the needs of the earth, then we will have begun to make fundamental and necessary changes in our minds. We will begin to understand and to mistrust and to change our wasteful economy, which markets not just the produce of the earth, but also the earth’s ability to produce.”

-Wendell Berry Think Little from A Continuous Harmony: Essays Cultural & Agricultural

Wendell Berry also once described eating as an Agricultural act. As we become more aware of this intrinsic connection, the necessity of understanding where our food comes from becomes extremely vital. Eating Local has joined Organic as an important criterion for learning how to behave responsibly and sustainably. Consequently, the necessity to preserve vanishing prime agricultural land has become equally important and has the potential to shape how we reassess our Urban Spaces.

The Urban Farm is a model for alternative urban land use where people grow food, work together, take care of the land, and build community. Throughout its 36 year history, the Urban Farm has been a place and a process, integrating biological, ecological, economic and social concerns. Key to these concerns is the Urban Farm’s interactive relationship with like-minded Community Programs, offering guidance and hands-on assistance. Urban Farm students are introduced to and directly involved with local concerns such as FOOD for Lane County, The School Garden Project of Lane County, Huerto de la Familia and The Farm to School Program of the Willamette Farm and Food Coalition.

The class is a hands-on experience where students learn by doing. We draw upon several organic gardening philosophies: basic NW French Raised Bed Intensive, Steve Solomon’s approach, and Uday Balwalker’s composting in situ/no till method as well as introductions to Biodynamic philosophy, Fukuoka’s natural gardening system and Permaculture strategies.

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