



GARDENING FOR LIFE

THE WHOLE VALUE OF URBAN COMMUNITY GARDENING

WHO WE ARE:

Green Village Initiative (GVI) is a non-profit in Bridgeport, Connecticut whose mission is to grow food, knowledge, leadership and community, through urban gardening and farming, to create a more just food system in Bridgeport. GVI has helped to maintain 13 community gardens and an urban farm throughout Bridgeport. **Fairfield University's Center for Social Impact** partners with GVI to realize and promote the benefits Bridgeport experiences from its investment in urban agriculture.

WHAT WE DO:

Green spaces in urban environments provide a broader payback to the neighborhoods and communities in which they reside, beyond the obvious. Adapting a framework utilized for open space and parks valuation, this project seeks to characterize many of the ways that community gardening projects provide health and wellness to those that live in the city of Bridgeport.

WHERE WE DO IT:

Green Village Initiative's farms and gardens nurture a grassroots movement of urban growers of all ages across the city. We manage a network of community gardens, school gardens, the Reservoir Community Farm, and a youth leadership program for the benefit of the Bridgeport community.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Visit gogvi.org to learn more, donate, volunteer, and share.

ADDED VALUE

In a pilot study conducted in late 2018, investigators formulated an estimate of a more complete value of local community gardening efforts:



Eight gardeners studied spent an average of 9.4 hours per week, tending to their crops, improving the soil, being noticeably present in their community.



Community gardens generate income for gardeners, produce fresh harvests at a lower cost to consumers, and lower transportation costs of shoppers to markets.



Urban greenspace, especially in the case of gardens, caused a 41.5% reduction in depression and a 50.9% reduction in feeling worthless in neighborhood residents. (Jerrett and van den Bosch, 2018).



Bridgeport has been on the FDA's "food deserts" listing since 2016.



A total of 20.8%, an unnecessarily high number of Bridgeport's residents, live below the poverty line.



Urban community gardening increases produce intake and physical activity levels, improving overall health.



A greater number of productive urban green spaces have been shown to improve urban **environmental health** indicators such as improved air quality, lower heat radiation and better water filtration and absorption.



Over 100 pounds of produce was harvested by the eight participating gardeners in one season.



Community Gardens Can Raise Property Values: Homes clustered around GVI run gardens experienced only a -21.80 change in property values compared to a -28.88 change in homes not near any gardens in Bridgeport, in the years directly following the housing bubble collapse of 2009.



Community gardens provide sources of food, safe spaces, mental health benefits, and stronger relationships. Check out our multimedia E-Cookbook at Fairfield.edu/GVICookbook.



The diversity of gardeners combined with new connections made in the garden fosters an **educational environment**.



Excess produce was donated by gardeners to food pantries, churches, fire departments, and more.



Urban gardens expand occasions for socialization, generosity, and trust.



Noticeable **reduction in crime and security expenditure** is anticipated due to increased community presence in gardening months.

MORE URBAN GARDENS = A BETTER BRIDGEPORT