

The logo features the words "URBAN FARM" in a bold, dark font at the top, with a small plant icon above the letter 'U'. Below this, "ROAD TRIP" is written in a white, sans-serif font on a dark, road-like background that curves upwards. At the bottom, "NEW YORK" is written in a white, sans-serif font on a dark, horizontal banner. The entire graphic is set against a yellow and orange sunburst background within a rounded, lime-green border.

URBAN FARM ROAD TRIP NEW YORK

The Big Apple shows its big commitment to sustainability initiatives and urban farming throughout the five boroughs.

BY CHERYL MORRISON

If you've visited New York, you've probably seen the Empire State Building and the Statue of Liberty, and maybe you've taken in a Broadway play or spent a day in one of the city's museums. Next time you come to town, consider a farm tour in the Big Apple. Urban farms are just a part of a sustainability trend that has been growing in the city for more than four decades, long before the concept became cool.

A thorough exploration of New York's agricultural scene will take you into all five of the city's boroughs. Most visitors never venture beyond Manhattan—the small, densely packed island where the city's best-known theaters, museums, restaurants and other tourist attractions are within easy reach—and you could spend a few days taking in Manhattan's sustainability efforts. But a true overview of urban farming in Gotham will take you into Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx and Staten Island, too.

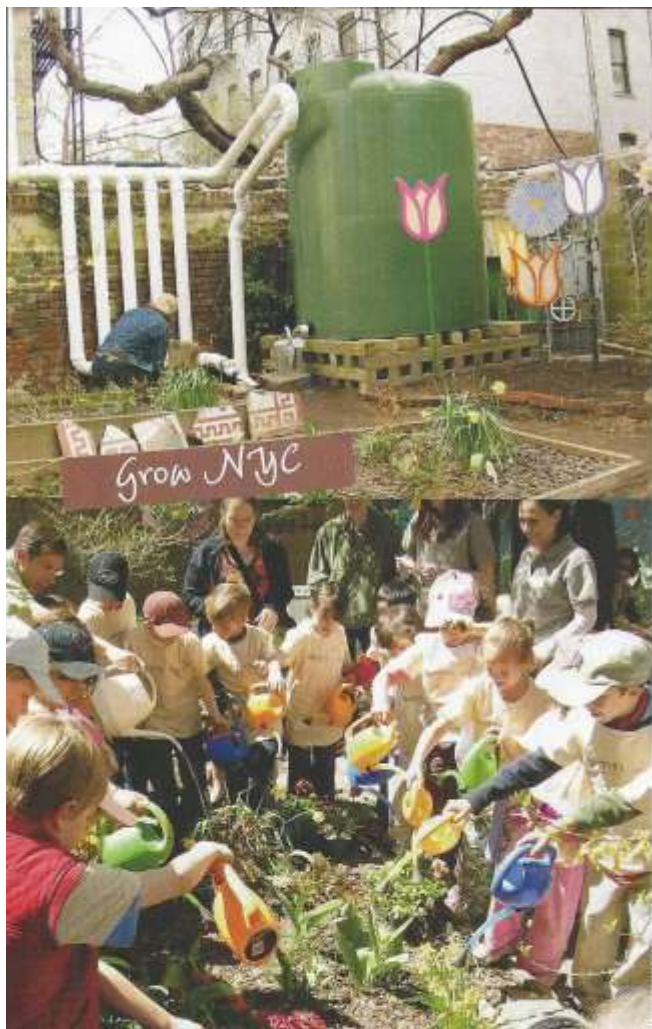
New York is a city of distinct neighborhoods with populations from around the world. Immigrants have also brought a rich variety of food traditions to New York—and gardening traditions to support them. In a tour of New York, without ever leaving the city, you'll see a spectrum of New Yorkers raising,

selling and purchasing many kinds of food, committed to treating the Earth responsibly.

Greenmarket

Your locavore tour of New York starts with a visit to a Greenmarket. These farmers' markets are found in every borough, but the one at Manhattan's Union Square is the biggest. You'll find meat and dairy products, eggs and poultry, maple syrup, cheese, honey, herbs, fruits, and vegetables from farms in upstate New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Connecticut. A few of the farms are as far away as northern Vermont, but most are within a couple of hours of the city. You'll also find wild seafood caught off New York's Long Island. In addition to raw food, much of it grown organically, you can buy baked goods (including hand-rolled pretzels), preserves, pesto, wines, and even soap and candles made at the farms. Some vendors also sell plants and fresh-cut flowers.

Greenmarket dates back to 1976, when a dozen farmers began selling their produce in a parking lot on Manhattan's East Side. It's now the largest and most diverse network of outdoor farmers' markets in America, with more than 200 farmers and



to eat fresh, whole, locally grown foods. The project's programs include farm tours, classroom visits by farmers and "seed-to-plate" cooking classes.

212-788-7476; www.grownyc.org/greenmarket

GrowNYC

The nonprofit GrowNYC has operated environmental programs to improve New Yorkers' quality of life since 1970. Greenmarket and many other urban-farming efforts in the Big Apple fall under its umbrella. One of its most empowering projects is Open Space Greening, in which staff members and volunteers build and maintain community gardens in what were once vacant lots. Its Phoenix Garden, a triangular plot in the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood of Brooklyn, produces 2,000 pounds of vegetables each season and shares them with a local soup kitchen that serves more than 500 meals daily.

GrowNYC also runs a rainwater harvesting project, in which 60 collection systems divert rainwater for use in community gardens.

GrowTruck, which delivers donated plant materials and lends high-quality gardening tools to community gardens, schools, nursing homes and other groups, is another of GrowNYC's gardening programs.

57 Chambers St., Room 228, New York, N.Y. 10007;
212-788-7900; www.grownyc.org

Red Hook Community Farm

The waterfront neighborhood of Red Hook hosts Brooklyn's largest public-housing project, which is home to nearly half of the neighborhood's 11,000 residents. In their midst is a 2½-acre farm where some 40 crops grow behind an imposing chain-link fence on what was once a ball field for workers from the neighborhood's old docks. The farm, which operates throughout the year, employs dozens of young people from impoverished families. (The average Red Hook family of four has an annual income of \$14,000.) Although the neighborhood is home to many artists in search of (relatively) inexpensive studio and living space, it has not been gentrified as rapidly as many other New York areas, probably because of its nearly nonexistent subway service.

In addition to food plants, Red Hook Community Farm raises other crops—including a patch of organic cotton—mainly for educational purposes. Schoolchildren visit the farm to plant wheat in the fall and return periodically to check its

fishermen—and throngs of happy customers—at 50 locations throughout the city. Schedules vary by location, but you can find a Greenmarket somewhere in the city any day of the week.

Patrons include not only enraptured consumers but also chefs. For a list of restaurants with ties to Greenmarket ingredients, see www.grownyc.org/greenmarket/chefswobuy.

In addition to the numerous retail Greenmarket locations, you can visit the Wholesale Greenmarket at Hunt's Point in the Bronx, where Greenmarket growers sell directly to small grocers, institutions and local distributors, as well as restaurants. Wholesale Greenmarket emphasizes freshness, with produce brought in straight from the farms each morning and much of it harvested less than 24 hours before sale.

Greenmarket also runs a Youth Education Project that connects the city's schoolchildren to area farmers to help them learn why it's important

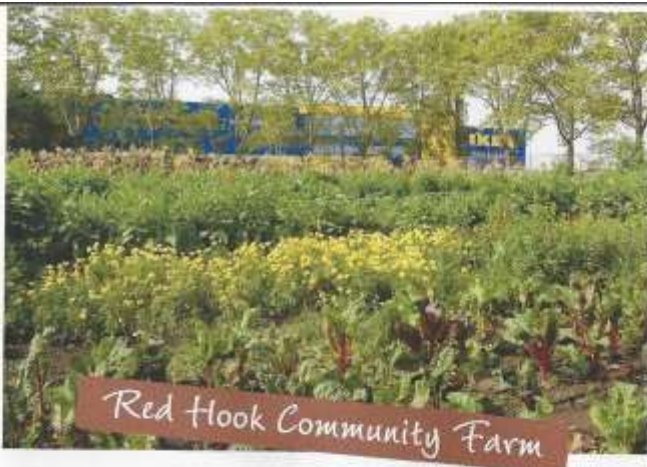
progress. Then they harvest and thresh the wheat and grind it into flour that they use to make tortillas.

In the spring of 2000, Michael Hurwitz and Ian Marvy, who had been frustrated by the waste of talent and energy they saw as social-services workers in Red Hook, founded the nonprofit organization Added Value, which operates the farm. When Red Hook's only supermarket went out of business a year later, Added Value opened a farmers' market. Every Wednesday and Saturday during the growing season, in two locations, the market sells produce from the neighborhood's own farm as well as from growers upstate and on Long Island. The farm also supplies a neighborhood community-supported-agriculture network, and it makes deliveries by hand truck every few days to three local organic restaurants.

718-855-5531; www.added-value.org/the-farms

Queens County Farm Museum

The city's largest farm has occupied 47 acres in Queens since 1697, which makes it the oldest continuously farmed site in the state. The city's Department of Parks and Recreation now owns the farm, which is operated as a museum. The farm's gift shop sells feed you can share with the sheep and goats while wandering among the outbuildings, fields, orchard and herb garden. On weekends, you can tour the old farmhouse and, weather permitting, go for a hayride. Admission to the farm is free (except on special-event days).



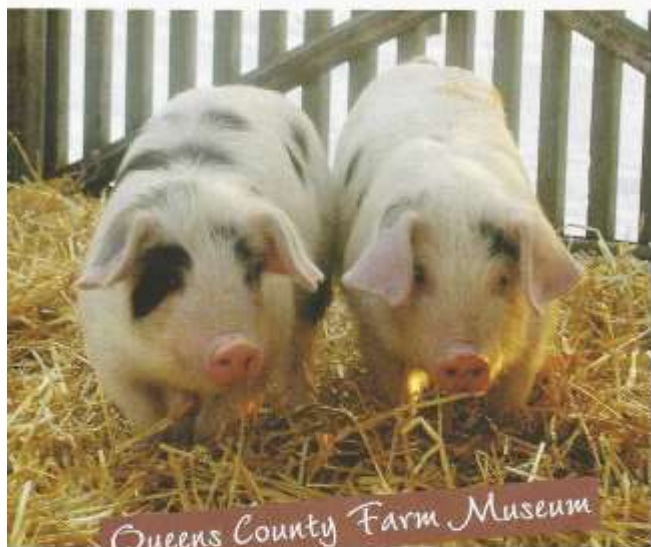
The farm's livestock includes 200 Rhode Island Red hens whose eggs are sold in the farm store. There are also pigs, goats, sheep, Italian Honey bees and a single Brown Swiss dairy cow named Franny. In addition to standard livestock breeds, the farm raises heritage breeds—varieties that the city's first European settlers depended on for survival.

The farm's new fiber program aims to sell the high-quality wool from its Cotswold sheep in the gift store. Cotswolds, one of the world's oldest wool breeds, produce a fine white fleece that's spun into lustrous yarns.

Pork sold in the farm's store comes from its heritage Tamworth, Large Black and Gloucester Old Spot pigs. The pigs forage for food in the farm's orchard and fields, but they also are fed used grains, byproducts from a Brooklyn brewery.

73-50 Little Neck Pkwy, Floral Park, N.Y. 11004-1129; 718-347-3276; www.queensfarm.org





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Green Apple Map

You might start your NYC farm exploration by checking out Green Apple Map at www.greenapplemap.org, where you'll find downloadable, printable maps to help you explore New York's sustainable side. Or go to www.opengreenmap.org/nyc, which is sponsored by the same nonprofit group, for an interactive map of New York that you can download to your mobile phone.

Locate not only general tourist attractions, such as museums, gardens and stores, but also solar panels, compost centers, recycling stations and other sites where New Yorkers are working to keep the city green. If you click on the icon marking the GreenPoint Manufacturing and Design Center in Brooklyn, for example, you learn that it's a nonprofit effort to create green manufacturing jobs by rehabilitating underused land. You also get a photograph of the site, its address and telephone number, and comments from visitors. You can add your own pictures and comments and even suggest new map sites.

Wendy Brawer conceived the idea of Green Apple Map in 1992, and what started as a local green-mapping project soon became a worldwide effort. In 1995, she founded the Green Map System, which provides similar offerings for locales throughout the Western Hemisphere, Europe, Africa, Asia and Australia. But Brawer and her colleagues continue to develop visual eco-guides to New York City. "We make new maps every couple of years, for different audiences and focusing on different topics," she says.

NYC Weblinks:

Check out more urban-farming stories from the city that never sleeps:

7 QUESTIONS WITH MARION NESTLE

New York University professor and author Marion Nestle dishes on sustainable food systems.

www.urbanfarmonline.com/70marionnestle

UNEXPECTED HIVES

Check out a rooftop beehive in NYC and hives in other cool locations.

www.urbanfarmonline.com/unexpectedhives

COMMUNITY DINING IN NEW YORK

Eat a locally prepared meal with fellow New Yorkers.

www.urbanfarmonline.com/communitydining

THE HUNGRY LOCAVORE

UF blogger Judith Hausman tempts your taste buds with New York's yummiest local food.

www.urbanfarmonline.com/hungrylocavore

NEWS:

NYC Launches Sustainable Food System

www.urbanfarmonline.com/foodworks

NYC Community Gardens Hit the Map

www.urbanfarmonline.com/gardenmaps

Model Law Makes Green Building Accessible

www.urbanfarmonline.com/greenordinance

Urban Farming to Get Corporate Boost

www.urbanfarmonline.com/greendevelopers

NASDAQ Tracks Green Markets

www.urbanfarmonline.com/nasdaq

School to Train New York Farmers

www.urbanfarmonline.com/farmschoolnyc

For example, the Chinatown Green Map pinpoints bicycle racks, mass transit stations, pedestrian zones and other information about getting around Manhattan's largest Asian enclave, plus where to find solar panels and the neighborhood's Greenmarket. With the Compost Green Map, you can find composting sites all over Manhattan, from Inwood Hill, at the northern tip of the island (where a community center's food waste goes into a worm bin) to Battery Park City at the southern end (which has an advanced

compost system for handling office and supermarket food scraps). The compost map also includes a step-by-step guide to composting and a list of what can and cannot be composted.

If you're visiting New York, Braver suggests calling the Green Apple Map office in the East Village to schedule a visit. In addition to chatting with people who are knowledgeable about sustainability efforts throughout the city, you'll be given a copy of the Compost Green Map and information for a self-guided tour of green sites in the neighborhood. If someone at Green Apple is available, she says, "One of us will take you on our around-the-block tour."

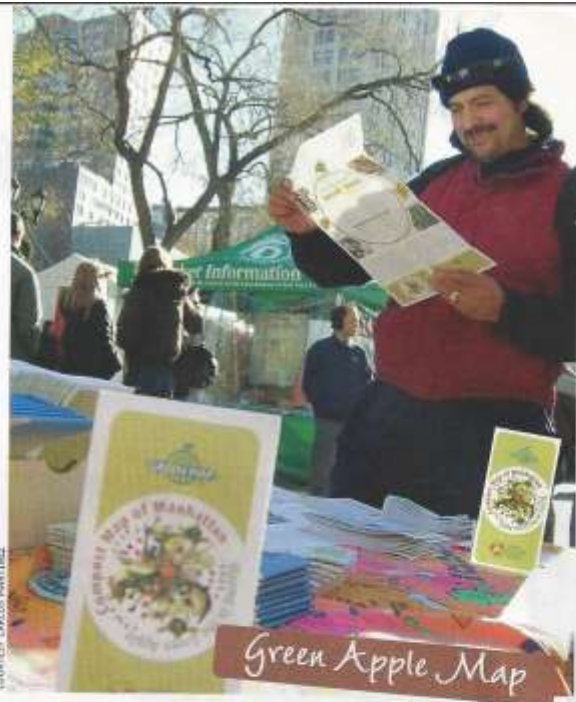
220A East 4th St., New York, N.Y. 10002-0249; 212-674-1631; www.greenapplemap.org

GreenHomeNYC

Throughout New York City, you'll find apartment buildings and small commercial sites that have gone green with encouragement from GreenHomeNYC. Scores of these green buildings are profiled—with pictures—on the group's website, www.greenhomenyc.org. You can browse the database to learn about an old Greenwich Village apartment building with a rooftop solar power system that was installed in 2004, for example, and a Harlem townhouse built in 2007 with a green roof, bamboo flooring, energy-efficient lighting, nontoxic



COURTESY CHRIS BENSCHKE, N.Y.



COURTESY CARLOS MARTINEZ

paints and adhesives, and numerous other eco-friendly features. Some of the sites, including a century-old house in Brooklyn where 90 percent of the materials used in a recent total renovation were recycled, are open for visits.

The GreenHomeNYC volunteers sponsor lectures, open-house tours of green buildings, an email newsletter and other efforts to spread the word about sustainable urban construction and building maintenance. In October 2010, 1,500 people attended the first of what is to become an annual Green Block Party to see displays of green products, hear lectures and take part in other activities.

On the third Wednesday evening of every month, GreenHomeNYC holds free monthly forums, open to everyone, with discussions that follow presentations by green-building professionals. Topics have included biofuels, retrofitting projects, and methods for reusing and managing storm-water runoff.

Through one of its programs, HouseCalls, GreenHomeNYC volunteers make presentations by invitation to condominium and cooperative-apartment-building governing boards. The aim of the 20-minute presentation is to familiarize decision makers with sustainable building concepts and connect them to local resources for help with projects to put those concepts into practice. ■

www.greenhomenyc.org

Cheryl Morrison lives on mostly local foods in Greenwich Village and southern Vermont.

weblink:

There is so much happening in NYC urban farming that we can't possibly cover it all here. Get the scoop on two more farms at www.urbanfarmingonline.com/nyroadtrip.