

CBRLocalFood: mapping and quantifying home and community food production

Progress Report April 2023

We thank everyone who has and is participating in our project *CBRLocalFood: mapping and quantifying home and community food production*. This is a University of Canberra project supported by the Australian Citizen Science Association, Theo Murphy Initiative and Australian Academy of Science. The project seeks to understand the amount of food produced by ACT residents and who produces food, their motivations and challenges. Understanding how much food is produced and the how and why is an important step in promoting increased urban food production. We are pleased to share a snapshot of the data we are collecting with COGs

Launched mid-February, we invited participation in the project broadly through nurseries, food-growing associated groups and print and radio media.

By Easter we have received 124 contributions to the producer survey and 90 production entries.

The majority of respondents grow food in their backyards, about a quarter are growing food in community gardens.

Quantification values have not yet been collated but participants report having grown tomatoes (20%), zucchini (14%), cucumber (9.2%), French beans (8.6%), capsicum (8%), herbs (7.7%), beetroot (6.5%), egg plant (4.9%), lettuce (4.9%), carrots (4.6%), silver beet (4.6%), lemons (4.3%), berries (3.7%), potatoes (3.1%), rhubarb (3.1%), kale (2.8%), onions (2.8%), sweet corn (2.5%), plums (2.15%), spinach (1.9%), apples (1.6%), Asian greens (1.6%), cabbage (1.6%), pumpkins (1.6%), peach (1.2%), squash (1.2%), almonds (0.9%)...and so on to describe the diverse foods grown. Animal food production is providing meat (4%), eggs (22.6%), manure (8.9%), honey (7.3%), worms (3.2%) and other (1.6%). Participants provided information about specific challenges to these harvests.



Photos to enable calculations need to be of single produce with white background and a coin in LHS-like the first 5 photos above. The other photos are inspirational however.

The registration survey provides rich information about participants and their gardens.

For example, even numbers of retired and full-time workers have filled out the surveys. We have participants diverse cultural backgrounds although Australian, British and European backgrounds dominate. Participants grow food to feed self/family (98%), sharing (49%), donations (6.5%), sale (0%). Participants grow food for relaxation/leisure (86%), improving well-being (75%), taste (73%), better nutrition (65%), for sustainable living (69%), to avoid chemicals (59%), save money (47%) and also to avoid purchasing from large commercial food suppliers (44%). Participants source their gardening knowledge from websites (74%), books (48%), friends (38%), community groups/workshops (34%), television (27.4%), magazines (24%) and family (23%).

Information has been collected on garden size and location. This will be used in production calculations. Gardens suffer from shade from trees (46%), buildings (21%), exposure to elements (53%), poor aspect (8%), poor drainage (13%), animal pests (57%), poor security (3%) and other (11%). Everyone has invested time and money into soil improvement: most used home-made compost (79%), mulch/straw (89%), fertilizer (64%), purchased manure (56%), externally sourced garden-bed mix (48%), purchased compost (39%), home-made manure from chickens (25%). Water for gardens mainly comes from mains supply (87%), home collected rainwater (41%), grey water (5%) and other (4%). Under half grow from seed (45%) rather than seedlings. Most seeds or seedlings were sourced from a national supplier (76%), some from previous crops (57%), local networks (23%), purchased from local sources (30%), and other (11%).

We are building up a rich picture of urban food production and its challenges in the ACT. Our initial focus is to collect data at key harvest periods in summer/autumn and winter/spring, but we welcome year-round participation. To participate please see [CBRLocalFood](#) and if you would like to participate but can't input data to the online survey we are happy to mail you a paper survey and return envelope if you let us know via the projects email: cbrlocalfood@canberra.edu.au. We are also listening to suggestions on how to improve the survey.

Thankyou!

CBRLocalFood team