

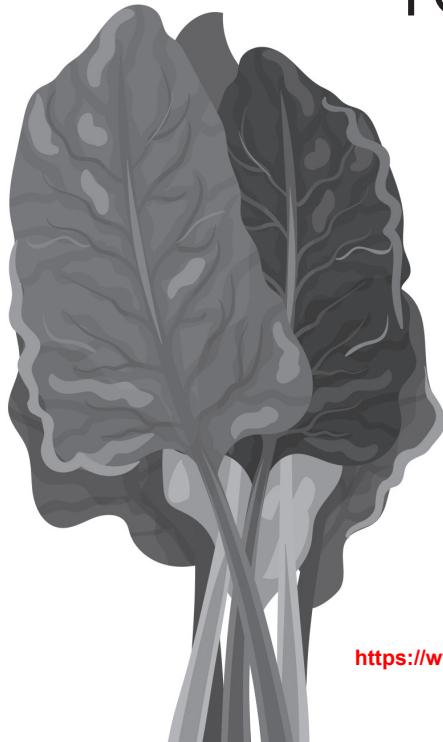


25

READY-TO-USE

Sustainable Living Programs for Libraries

EDITED BY **ELLYSSA KROSKI**



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FOR REVIEW ONLY

PREFACE

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, interest levels in sustainability and self-reliance topics have risen considerably among library patrons of all ages. Libraries of all types are enhancing their programming by embracing these timely topics and providing much sought-after instruction. They are organizing instructional workshops, forming gardening clubs, creating community gardens, building beekeeping exhibits, teaching patrons about reducing waste and sustainable food sources, and more.

25 Ready-to-Use Sustainable Living Programs for Libraries is an all-in-one guide to how to plan, organize, and run sustainable living programs in libraries. Programs range from gardening and herbal medicine to teaching pioneer crafts, homesteading topics such as composting and beekeeping, and hosting food preservation events.

Each program walks the reader through step-by-step instructions for how to prepare for and host these events, including a materials and equipment list, a budget, and recommendations for age ranges and type of library. Programs range in cost, topic, and difficulty, so there is something for every size and type of library, both rural and urban. The authors of these programs are knowledgeable experts and professionals from the library field who are offering real-world programming ideas for public, school, and academic libraries.

INTRODUCTION

Building a Sustainable and Self-Reliant Lifestyle

ELLYSSA KROSKI

Sustainable living involves making changes in your everyday life to ensure that you leave the planet a better place after you're gone. These changes can include reducing waste, recycling, saying no to plastic, growing your own food, repairing rather than replacing, and reducing your overall carbon footprint. This doesn't have to happen overnight; it can start with baby steps such as adopting reusable shopping bags, buying from local farmers, and carpooling.

Living in a time of a worldwide pandemic, supply chain shortages, civil unrest, and the ongoing global political uncertainty of today's world has awakened an increased interest in sustainable and self-reliant living. In what *Forbes* magazine has dubbed an "urban exodus," many Americans have chosen to leave densely populated cities behind in favor of rural locales where they can build a more self-sufficient lifestyle.¹

Far from the need to social distance or battle morning traffic, I walk out to my chicken coop each day at sunrise to collect a basket full of pastel-colored eggs from my Easter Egger chickens that lay pink, blue, and olive-green eggs and that serenade me with the egg song which they sing in order to congratulate themselves after a fresh one is laid. I am one of the many people who have opted for the freedom of building a self-sufficient and sustainable way of life during the COVID-19 pandemic.

I traded my four-bedroom, 2,500-square-foot home in a planned community for 14 acres in the country and a 1,100-square-foot manufactured home with just enough room for everything I need, at a fraction of the mortgage and energy consumption. I work from home, managing technology and marketing projects for my library, and I wander outside when I need a break, and pet my goats and sheep and tinker around with my gardens and hothouses. With no daily commute, I save a ton in gas as well as my own precious time while also helping to reduce my carbon footprint.

Rather than turn on the television every night, I'll often start a fire with firewood cut from my land and look up at a sky filled with stars unlike

FIGURE 0.1 | The author bottle-feeding a lamb on her homestead



anything I'd ever laid eyes on living in the city. I take pride in my gardens and the ability to grow not just my own vegetables, but fodder plants to feed some of my animals, the herbs and spices that I love to cook with daily such as basil, oregano, sage, parsley, dill, cilantro, rosemary, and chives, and my own loofah sponges. And I have fruit cages protecting my blackberry, raspberry, and blueberry bushes alongside the lemon, lime, and banana trees that I hope to harvest fruit from this year.

In the short time that I've lived here, I have learned to can, freeze, and dehydrate my vegetables, beef, herbs, and flowers; cook and bake on a daily basis; cut and style my own hair; and make my own beauty products. After living in New York City's Upper East Side for over twenty-five years (and stopping for a slice each night on the way home from work) and then in the major tourist destination of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, this is quite a change, but I couldn't be happier.

My family has since followed me on this adventure, with my sister and parents each adding their own homes to the property to create a family homestead we call "The Shire" where we share resources, experience, and expertise. This past winter, a cooperative purchase of a half a beef steer from a local cattle farmer amounted to a fraction of the cost of purchasing meat at the grocery store, saved us all countless trips to said store, and fed all three households on the homestead well into the spring. On holidays we have but to roam across the meadow to gather, and if one of us needs help with a project or simply runs out of sugar, the family is only steps away.

FIGURE 0.2 | The author's goat and sheep meadow



This has been a huge learning curve for me because I've never met anyone who has done anything like this, and I would have loved guidance on any number of topics from my local library. Libraries in both urban and rural areas are in a unique position to be able to offer library patrons timely instructional programs that teach this type of sustainable and self-reliant living. From homesteading topics such as how to reduce food waste to creating DIY cleaning products, to growing and preserving one's own food, libraries can support patrons who wish to live "off the grid," those who want to start their own hobby farm, others who are seeking to create a homestead, or patrons who simply want to learn how to garden.

This book was compiled to help guide librarians who want to institute these types of programs in their libraries.

READING LIST

The following is my personal bookshelf of homesteading, gardening, preserving, and hobby farm books and magazines that I own and recommend. Each of these works helped to give me a great start on this rewarding adventure.

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Chickens, a bimonthly magazine from the editors of *Hobby Farms*: www.hobbyfarms.com/subscribe-new/

Hobby Farms, a bimonthly magazine: www.hobbyfarms.com/subscribe-new/

Mother Earth News, a bimonthly magazine: <https://store.motherearthnews.com/magazine/mother-earth-news>

The New Pioneer, a quarterly magazine: www.amazon.com/Harris-Publications-New-Pioneer/dp/B00F8P2VOK

Self-Reliance, a quarterly magazine: www.backwoodshome.com/shop/product/sr-one-or-two-years-subscription/

Special Issues

Chickens Magazine, “Chicken Coops & Playgrounds Special Issue”: www.hobbyfarms.com/back-issues/

Chickens Magazine, “Ducks 101 Special Issue: The Essential Guide to Raising Waterfowl, Everything You Need to Know, and More”: www.hobbyfarms.com/back-issues/

Hobby Farms, “Goats 101 Special Issue: The Essential Guide to Raising Goats,” www.hobbyfarms.com/product/goats-101/

Mother Earth News, “Beginner’s Guide to Living on Less,” <https://store.motherearthnews.com/product/mother-earth-news-beginner-s-guide-to-living-on-less>

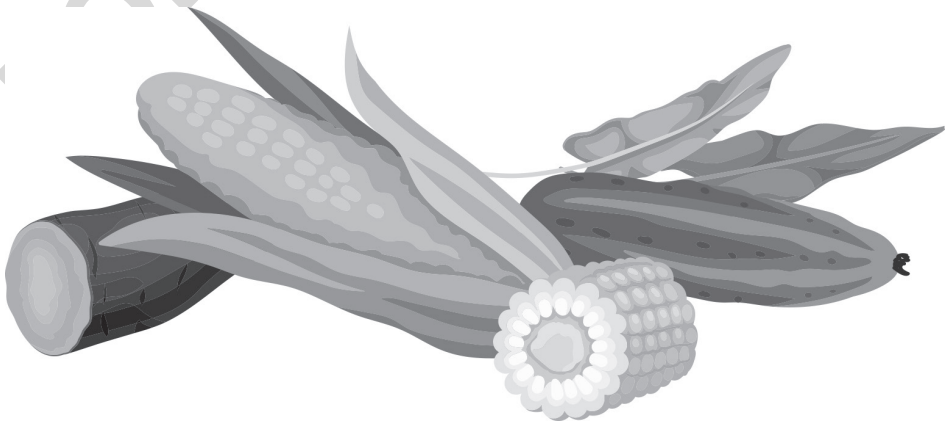
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NOTE

1. Chris Dorsey, “Pandemic Leads to Urban Exodus as Families Turn to Self-Reliance and Off-the-Grid Living,” *Forbes*, June 10, 2020, www.forbes.com/sites/chrisdorsey/2020/06/10/pandemic-leads-to-urban-exodus-as-families-turn-to-self-reliance-and-off-the-grid-living/?sh=4cabac10cdaa.

PART I

Gardening Programs



Coordinating Gardening and Sustainability Programs with Local Experts

ANNA FRANTZ

The interest in all subjects related to gardening and sustainability continues to grow in library communities, especially for those who are trying to be more environmentally conscious. As librarians, we want to support our communities' interests and ensure access to these kinds of programs. However, if one has limited experience with this subject, planning these programs can feel overwhelming. Fortunately, most communities, whether large or small, have gardening and sustainability experts who are happy to share their knowledge. This chapter will provide examples of organizations your library can contact to host programs, as well as the key details you'll want to discuss with them to ensure a successful program.

Age Range	Library Type	Cost Estimate
Kids (ages 3–7) Tweens (ages 8–12) Young adults (ages 13–18) Adults	Public libraries	\$0–\$200

Cost Considerations

The costs for featuring presenters can vary. Most government organizations and nonprofits will present for free because education and outreach are part of their mission; in return, you can have your library promote their organization and purchase any supplies the presenters may need for their programs. If your budget is limited, check with your local plant nurseries to see if they are willing to donate materials in exchange for advertising their business. Some presenters may have all the supplies they already need, or they may only be showing a PowerPoint. If presenters have published books on the subject they're speaking about, allow them to sell their books after the program.

OVERVIEW

Regardless of the topic, you should schedule each program for at least an hour and a half; if the program requires participants to create a project or gets hands-on, or you would like time for a Q&A following the presentation, schedule it for two hours. Have one staff person, typically the coordinator, stay with the presenter during the program in case they need any assistance, such as with technology or handing out materials. The attendance cap for each program will vary depending on the size of your room as well as what kind of program it is; for example, lectures can encompass more people, whereas workshops can vary in size, depending on your budget for supplies or whether presenters need to be more hands-on with instruction.

NECESSARY EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

Each program will require different materials to run successfully. However, most will require:

- A laptop with at least two HDMI ports to allow connection with a projector and a USB
- A projector screen
- A stand to hold the laptop and projector
- A table if the presenter wants to display any visual materials that correspond with their program, such as any garden-related equipment, handouts, or books they have for sale

Examples of Organizations to Contact

The following list of potential presenters is a small sample, but it is a good start for those beginning to plan programs with outside experts. Some of the programs suggested may only be offered seasonally. Additionally, depending on the size of your city, you may not have access to some of these resources.

To contact presenters, simply conduct an internet search containing your city, state, and the subject or organization you would like to feature a program about. Searches can be subject-specific (e.g., “Albuquerque, NM aeroponics”) or organization-based (e.g., “Salt Lake City, UT Master Gardeners”). Many cities have various nonprofit or government organizations that specialize in these subjects but which may not be listed on national websites or registries. In addition to searching online, attending city, state, and county fairs can provide great networking opportunities and is one of the best ways to learn what the local organizations are and what educational outreach they conduct.

- *Beekeepers:* Programs include beekeeping basics and plants that encourage pollinators, including your native bees. Certified beekeepers, both private and commercial, can be found through state associations, county extension programs, your city’s Parks and Recreation Department, as well as garden centers.
- *County extension programs:* Programs are extensive and diverse and can include canning, community gardening, and aeroponics and hydroponics. 4-H Youth Development, Master Gardeners, and Master Composters are all examples of county extension programs.
- *Garden centers:* A garden center is a retail operation that sells plants and related products and supplies for domestic gardening. Each garden center is unique, and many have members clubs, which offer price discounts in exchange for a membership fee. Check and see which member clubs your local garden center is involved with regarding the topics of self-sufficiency and sustainability. Their programs will be similar to those of Master Gardener organizations and county extension programs.
- *Master Gardener organizations:* Master Gardeners are a great resource, as each organization typically has multiple volunteers who are trained in a variety of areas and can offer more specific, advanced programs in addition to introductory 101s. Programs are diverse and far-reaching

and can include raised-bed gardening, saving seeds, and growing trees, to name just a few topics. Check to see if your local Master Gardener's organization has a speakers bureau. If they do, contacting their liaison is the best way to get acquainted with the members who teach on the subjects you're most interested in.

- *Master Composters:* Programs include vermicomposting (composting with worms), Bokashi composting (fermented composting), and area-specific composting (e.g., desert composting). Check your local county extension to see if your locality has a Master Composter. If not, most Master Gardeners will offer basic composting programs.
- *Herbalists:* Programs include herbal medicine, edible plants, and aromatherapy.
- *Parks and Recreation Department:* Programs may include how to build a community garden and backyard orchard culture (i.e., how to grow, care for, and prune home orchard trees, fruiting vines, canes, and other fruiting perennials). Check and see if your local Parks and Recreation Department has an open space or a botanical garden. Programs vary depending on your location, as they focus on local plants and natural resources.
- *City water authorities and utility departments:* Programs may include drip irrigation and rainwater harvesting.

STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS

Once you decide what kind of program you want to host and with whom, contact the organization and propose that your library would like to partner with them to host an educational program. Do this at least three months before you'd like to host the program. E-mail is usually the best way to do this, so you'll have in writing what you have already discussed with the organization. Be specific about what kind of program you want to have. If you're contacting a general organization such as Master Gardeners, they'll need to know what you want featured in order to connect you with the person best suited to lead the program.

After making initial introductions, the key things to discuss are the date and time of the event, the event's title and summary, whether registration is required, and the program's budget (materials fees as well as a possible speaker fee). In the program's summary, make sure to include the

presenter's name, the organization they work for, and their qualifications. For online advertisements, make sure to link the organization's website with your program summary.

At least one month before the event, design a promotional flyer that can be used in your library's building as well as online, including social media. E-mail a PDF of the flyer to the presenter so they can approve it and use it to promote their program on their organization's website and social media. If you don't have to follow a certain format for your library's promotional materials, it is worth asking if the presenter has a flyer already created for past programs they've hosted. Although this advertising method can save a lot of time for you and your presenter, make sure that all critical information is changed on the flyer if you do this, such as the date and time, location, and registration procedures.

A couple of weeks before the program, make sure you have all the materials your presenter will need. If the amount of materials is dependent upon registration, you may have to wait until registration for the event closes, which could range from a week to just a few days before the program. If the program requires technology, such as a PowerPoint, ensure that everything works a couple of days ahead of time, and have the presenter save the PowerPoint onto a USB in case there are any issues with the internet connection. The presenter should come at least thirty minutes before the program begins in order to make sure that the space, technology, and materials are set up correctly.

RECOMMENDED NEXT PROJECTS

The great thing about coordinating with outside organizations is that you can plan many gardening and sustainability programs without having to come up with all the instructions and materials yourself. If your initial program goes well, see about hosting a program once a month. If your staff and budget allow, you can also look at hosting a series during peak gardening or sustainability months (e.g., planning for your spring garden or weekly programs in April for National Gardening Month).

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