

DID YOU KNOW . . .



## GROWING VEGETABLES

IN YOUR FRONT YARD IS

**AGAINST THE LAW?**

Sacramento's existing front yard landscape ordinance, which limits landscapes to "primarily low growing groundcover or turf," makes it illegal to grow most annuals and perennials - including fruits and vegetables - in Sacramento's front yards.

Scheduled to go before the Sacramento City Council on March 20<sup>th</sup>, the current proposed ordinance revision continues to **regulate fruits and vegetables by limiting them to 30% of the landscaped area and four feet in height.** (Restricting the growing of tomatoes, beans, peas and other edibles in front yards.)

Not only are front yard garden options critical when backyards are unsuitable for growing food, but diverse landscapes can also help address energy conservation, resource depletion, hunger, food security, and environmental issues.

### **Show Your Support for Front Yard Gardens !!**

- **Call, write, or e-mail the Mayor and your City Councilmember:**  
Ask them to support environmentally friendly and sustainable landscapes by adopting the proposed ordinance language with the deletion of Section C, which restricts fruits and vegetables. (Further information on back.)
- **Attend the Sacramento City Council meeting:**  
Date: **Tuesday, March 20, 2007**  
Time: **7:00 p.m.**  
Where: **Council Chambers in City Hall**  
**915 I Street**
- **Share this information with family, friends, and fellow gardeners.**

**Contact your City Councilmember and the Mayor  
Tell them - "Give Peas a Chance!"**

## Background Information:

On March 20, 2007 the Sacramento City Council will vote on the proposed revision of the Front Yard Landscape Ordinance 17.68.010. The existing code restricts front yard landscapes to “primarily low groundcover or turf.” City staff have proposed that the new code language include annuals, perennials, grass, and other diverse landscaping; however Section C of the proposed ordinance arbitrarily restricts the growing of fruit and vegetables to 30% of the landscaped setback area, and limits the height to four feet (with the exception of fruit trees).

This issue has peaked community interest and many residents are concerned about having options for what they can grow in their front yards. On January 11, 2007 the Sacramento City Planning Commission unanimously voted to recommend adoption of the proposed code language with the deletion of Section C.

Sacramento has committed to making the city more sustainable. Valuable city resources are currently being directed towards programs for water conservation, water quality (toxic lawn chemical contamination of local rivers and streams), and green waste management. Adopting new code language that supports diverse urban landscapes in Sacramento’s front yards will not only help address crucial environmental issues, but will help Sacramento meet its sustainability goals.

Food security and hunger are also current concerns that can be addressed through home gardens. As many backyards are unsuitable for growing food, the option of front yard gardening is critical. Any limitations on growing edible landscapes restricts a family’s access to needed food.

### Why Diverse Landscapes Instead of Conventional Landscapes?

- Conventional landscape equipment creates 5% of the nation’s air pollution and mowing a lawn for just one hour with a gas mower pollutes the air as much as driving a car 350 miles!
- Average urban gardens can produce several hundred pounds of food a year, and supplement family food budgets with affordable, fresh, and optimally nutritious food.
- Stormwater runoff from turf is one of America’s greatest sources of water pollution.
- Americans put more than 100 million pounds of chemicals on conventional turf landscapes each year, which is ten times as many chemicals per acre as industrial farmland.
- Lawns cover more land than any other single irrigated crop in the U.S.
- Watering lawns consumes 60% of municipal freshwater in the western states, and water transport accounts for Sacramento’s greatest use of energy.

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**Thank you, Sacramento Citizens for Sustainable Landscapes**

For more information visit [www.sacgardens.org](http://www.sacgardens.org) or [www.OrganicSacramento.org](http://www.OrganicSacramento.org)