Urban Agriculture Book Series
Call for Proposals

Springer has launched an interdisciplinary book series for researchers, professionals, policymakers and practitioners on agriculture in and near urban areas as a multifunctional resource for resilient food systems and socio-culturally, economically and ecologically sustainable cities.
For this series, we are looking for proposal for edited, coauthored, and single-authored books in this area.

Scope

Ongoing urbanization processes are key drivers of change in the world today, generating both daunting challenges and promising possibilities. Urban agriculture (UA) is becoming recognized as one of the most important contributors to the global sustainability of cities. While its most evident function is that of food supply to the urban population, UA also represents a multidimensional and multifunctional approach for economic, social and environmental development of sustainable and resilient cities¹.

Hundreds of millions of people worldwide are already practicing UA. The majority of these are part-time practitioners cultivating crops or raising livestock to supplement their livelihood, access healthy food, improve their living environment, or enjoy the pleasures of manually reconnecting to soil and greenery. Scores of practitioners are also involved in market production of food and agricultural products, many of them working full time, generating revenues that can be measured in the billions. Despite severe pressures of population growth on lands in and around cities, numerous cities have shown growth in urban producers, production and value – indeed it is likely that the percentage of the world’s food products grown or raised in metropolitan areas large and small will continue to increase. Although people practicing UA are found mostly in poorer countries, their presence is also expanding in richer countries. Nowadays, UA is recognized for the important role it plays in the South to reduce poverty and promote social, economic and sustainable development; in parallel, social movements in the North are also calling for an integration of urban agriculture in the management and development of cities and in local and national food systems.

¹ One definition of urban agriculture is: “the growing of plants and the raising of animals for food and other uses within and around cities and towns, and related activities such as the production and delivery of inputs, and the processing and marketing of products. Urban Agriculture is located within or on the fringe of a city and comprises a variety of production systems, ranging from subsistence production and processing at household level to fully commercialized agriculture.” From René van Veenhuizen, “Cities Farming for the Future” in Cities Farming for the Future: Urban Agriculture for Green and Productive Cities, ed. René van Veenhuizen (RUAF Foundation, IIRR and IDRC, 2006), p. 2.
More and more cities are collecting statistics and implementing programs to support UA worldwide, from Europe and North America, to South America, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia. At the same time, more and more researchers are becoming interested in the new scientific fields of study around UA. Case studies, field analyses, action research results and experiences from multistakeholder participatory projects are published in various scientific books or reviews, but most of the time, these are not really devoted to this issue. While some journals have included UA in their coverage, none focus on this as a specific area of scientific study. The books devoted to UA that recently appeared mostly aim for a general audience. One of the consequences is a difficulty in constituting a global research community to debate the lessons from UA initiatives, to compare approaches, and to supply tools for aiding in the conception and evaluation of various strategies of UA development.

Urban Agriculture can be potentially a very wide topic for scientists to explore, as it is a multifunctional set of activities. Areas of analysis include the relation of UA to:

- education (to enhance public awareness as well as personal and political empowerment);
- economic development, for the generation of small enterprises and the reduction of poverty;
- agricultural systems, through innovative approaches to agriculture production, undertaken by newer groups based on alternative techniques to those practiced in the industrial agriculture system, providing new connections to the urban food system;
- food security, as a means to increase food self-sufficiency, food equality, and nutritional and qualitative aspects of food supply;
- leisure activities, providing connections with nature, social interactions, improved health, by promoting outdoor physical activity and more generally direct and indirect impacts on the various aspects of the citizens’ quality of life;
- land use, particularly the enhancement of urban space through citizen appropriation of vacant and underused lands and other areas;
- management of the urban environment, including the protection of urban biodiversity and the flow of matter and energy within the urban ecosystem;
- social movements, including social justice, gender dimensions, and mobilization processes;
- urban landscapes, from the largest scales (integration of agricultural and built patterns) to the smallest (design considerations for fitting food production into buildings).

Risks related to the urban environment (soil, air, water pollution) and/or resulting from inadequate practices or use of resources have long been a concern around UA; the scientific community can help to better address these risks, enlightening public decisions about safer localisation or resource use by UA. Moreover, barriers and constraints which limit UA’s ability to contribute to healthier, wealthier and more sustainable cities must be addressed. Improved methodologies of analysis, evaluation and comparison of all the systemic benefits of UA for cities and a clear balance of possible risks and costs require expanded dissemination of
scientific knowledge in this area and a constant effort of clarifying concepts and of building effective operational tools.

The concerned scientific community is large because UA combines agricultural issues with those related to city management and development. Thus it is an interdisciplinary field where environmental sciences, agronomy, urban and regional planning, architecture, landscape design, economics, social sciences, soil sciences, public health and nutrition come together, recognizing UA’s contribution to meeting society’s basic needs, feeding people, structuring the cities while shaping their development. All these scientific fields are of interest for this Book Series. Books in this Series will analyze UA research and actions; program implementation, urban policies, technological innovations, social and economic development, management of resources (soil/land, water, wastes…) for or by urban agriculture, are all pertinent here. The main objective of this Book Series is to mobilize and enhance capacities to share UA experiences and research results, compare methodologies and tools, identify technological obstacles, and adapt solutions. By diffusing this knowledge, the aim is to contribute to building the capacity of policy-makers, professionals and practitioners in governments, international agencies, civil society, the private sector as well as academia, to effectively incorporate UA in their field of interests. This Book Series includes a mix of edited, coauthored, and single-authored books. These books could be based on research programs, conference papers, or other collective efforts, as well as completed theses or entirely new manuscripts.

Themes of Interest

Urban agriculture touches on many themes. Various topics for books could include, as examples, the following.

- Waste and Nutrient Management for Urban Agriculture
- Emergency Agriculture as Post-Disaster Response
- From Seed to Table: Value Chain Development for Urban Agriculture
- The Planning and Design of Urban Agriculture
- Urban and Market Gardens for Vulnerable Populations
- Issues and Perspectives on Soils, Air and Water in Urban Agriculture
- Historical Perspectives on Urban Agriculture
- Social Movements and Urban Agriculture
- Multifunctionality of Urban Agriculture
- Linkages between Intra-Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture

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Important Information for Authors

How to submit your book
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Manuscript Guidelines

Homepage for Book Series
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