



Food for the neighbourhood

A guide to setting up a community garden in an apartment building



Foreword

More and more housing companies and rental properties want to offer their residents a wide range of housing services. A community garden is a sign of the housing company's efforts to develop living comfort and a sense of community.

This guide contains instructions on how to set up a community garden in an apartment building. For many companies, their property management values include transparency and equality. At its best, urban farming can increase residential comfort, community spirit, and landscape values. Well-functioning and sustainable practices are also necessary for decision-making and establishing of urban farming. Planning, open and timely communication, and a clear division of responsibilities also benefit procurement for urban farming.

This guide explains different cultivation solutions for both outdoor and indoor use, and further discusses options related to decision-making, procurement, insurance, and residential communications. Each building can choose its own way of managing urban farming.

Through the cultivation experiments of the 6Aika: CircularHoodFood project (Circular Economy in Urban Neighbourhoods – Low-Carbon Food, Urban Production and Biowaste Recycling), the aim was to find the best solutions to promote urban farming in apartment building environments. The cultivation experiments were carried out at VAV Yhtymä Oy's rental property in Vantaa and in a housing company in Helsinki in summer 2021.

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Being able to pick herbs and vegetables from your own garden for cooking is wonderful. Photo: Markku Laine

1. Nine reasons for setting up a community garden for the residents of a housing association

1. A community garden creates a more comfortable living environment

It is easy to make a housing company's premises, such as the yard, basement space, or even the club room, more attractive by bringing in more greenery. The community garden, changing throughout the summer, is nice to look at and observe, and its care provides residents with a natural reason to spend time in common areas.

2. We can all be urban farmers

Urban farming in a housing company is fun and does not require a green thumb. People learn by doing, and harvesting is rewarding. Taking care of the community garden is a light task when it is shared with others.

3. Local food is of interest to residents

The appreciation of locally produced food is very current. Lots of people also want their kids to see where food comes from.



Photo: Markku Laine

4. A community garden brings the neighbourhood together

Urban farming is suitable for all ages. Farming and gardening together is an easy way to get to know your neighbours and to connect with the housing company's surroundings.

5. Urban nature is becoming more diverse

Insects, birds, frogs, and hedgehogs... At its best, the community garden and its surroundings can be a place where a wide variety of animal and plant species thrive. Instead of a flat urban yard covered by a lawn, an interesting habitat can be formed using trees, shrubs, and meadow grasses. An environment that is easy for people to enjoy, as well.

6. Nutrients circulate from kitchen to garden

Urban farming is an everyday circular economy at its best. In the urban space, biowaste is collected centrally at the waste facility, which turns the biowaste into soil and biofuels. However, useful nutrients can be collected on a small scale from the home kitchen and put to use in community gardens. For example, you can fertilise a mushroom culture with coffee grounds and boil lime-rich fertiliser from eggshells for tomatoes.

7. Indoor farming produces food all year round

When the harvest season in the yard ends in the autumn, the food growing continues indoors. Hydroponic farming solutions, for example, produce salads and herbs with the help of artificial light. Using these systems, it is also easy to grow the seedlings needed for the community garden in the spring.



The windy roof of Kaapelitehdas serves as a green oasis for pollinators. Photo: Angela Oker-Blom

8. You don't have to do everything yourself

Good urban farming services and products are available for housing companies. If a community garden set up on an experimental basis is gaining popularity, the housing company can later obtain a more versatile plan, a full crop plan, or even training from a professional. For another building, the services can be useful at the beginning, and then as people's skills grow, the community gardens flourish with the help of the residents.

9. The whole building or neighbourhood becomes more attractive

Community gardens that delight residents are noticed. There are plenty of people wanting to live in a building like this. Housing companies in the neighbourhood can also work together to set up a block-level community garden that will increase yard utilisation and enliven the environment.

2. What kind of community garden suits us?

The design of the community garden begins with listening to wishes and mapping interest. What do the residents want in the yard and common areas of the housing company? Would the other housing companies in the neighbourhood be interested in setting up a community garden? The survey can be done as an anonymous survey.





Seeds need moisture for germination, as well as a suitable temperature.
Photo: Markku Laine

3. An ABC of urban farming outdoors

The easiest way to get a taste of urban farming is to grow food outdoors in cultivation boxes. Cultivation boxes are suitable for a wide range of yards. Seedlings can be bought ready-grown, or they can be grown from seeds. Potted herbs and salads purchased from the shop can also be planted in a pot or cultivation box.

RESIDENTS AS URBAN FARMERS

In many houses, there are already various residents' committees and active residents who promote the realisation of urban farming. The activity of even one resident is enough to start urban farming. Such a person does not necessarily need to have any cultivation expertise. The most important thing is the ability to organise things and inspire others so that everyone feels involved. Urban farming connects and invites residents of all ages.

FORM OF CULTIVATION, that is, by what methods and what is cultivated

The principles and practices of cultivation should be reviewed together. There is plenty of choice. Cultivation can be carried out outdoors: in cultivation boxes and plant beds, with berry bushes, mushroom cultivation, and fruit trees. It is nice to take care of the cultivation boxes when you do not have to squat in the garden. Urban farming can also be carried out indoors, and year-round cultivation is made possible by an indoor cultivation solution, for example, by vertical farming. Decide on growing mediums, plant species, fertilisation, and plant protection measures.



Basil seedlings grow indoors under artificial light and receive their nutrients from nutrient solution. Light gravel and stone wool are suitable as a growing medium.
Photo: Markku Laine

WHO STARTS, PROCUREMENT AND PERMITS

Is the initiative taken by a housing company, a rental company, a residents' committee, or a resident?

A cultivation procurement by the company, like other acquisitions made with common funds, should be common and available to everyone. Achieving equality and providing timely information to residents is important in preparing a community garden.

In addition to a procurement by a housing company, residents also have the opportunity to take urban farming forward. In rental housing and right-of-occupancy properties, the initiative to make the acquisition, as well as the proposals for changes and extensions to the related common premises and their purpose, are made to the administration of the rental property or right-of-occupancy company through the residents' committee.

A good starting point for a community garden is to talk to other residents and put messages on the bulletin board.

Residents can also make mutual acquisitions (shareholder minority procurement), in which case permission for the use of space for urban farming must be requested from the housing company.

The cost of urban farming solutions varies, which affects the procurement procedure. The cultivation procurement of a housing company, rental property, or right-of-occupancy property may be small in scale. For a housing company, it is comparable, for example, to the purchase of a flower box. The Board of Directors may decide on smaller purchases independently without the Annual General Meeting, for example, when there is money left over in the property management budget after compulsory expenditure.

New, larger, more far-reaching (service) purchases, such as yard care services or summer flower contracts, must be approved by the Annual General Meeting to be included in the budget. The size of the housing company and its ability to make (extra) purchases vary. If the procurement has no impact on the consideration or the management budget, the procurement is unlikely to be resisted. If the acquisition has an impact on the consideration or the management budget, the budget should be disclosed and an increase in the management budget for the outdoor areas should be proposed in good time. Residents are often open to improving residential comfort and potential financial investment when the effects on considerations are reasonable, thought out, and presented well.

SUPPORT AND VISION

Gardeners and horticulturists, urban entrepreneurs, associations, advisory organisations, yard builders and designers, and other professionals provide services suitable for housing companies. You can buy a ready-made cultivation solution for the building or order training for the residents – or even a complete maintenance solution. A cultivation service procured with common money is a good way to increase equality.

PLACES FOR URBAN FARMING

Most housing companies have underused common space. Do you have a club room or a cold cellar in the building? In general, there are unused spaces suitable for cultivation in apartment buildings.

The size, plant selection, and method of cultivation affect the choice of location. Shady places and shrubbery areas are suitable for mushrooms. Vegetables and herbs thrive in sunlight in the yard, but also grow successfully indoors with the help of nutrient solutions and artificial light.

It is recommended to map a suitable place for urban farming with a service provider and/or technical manager/service, and to take into account the spatial needs and other requirements of urban farming.

PLANT SPECIES AND DIVERSITY

Vibrant micro-organic activity and nutrient retention are characteristics of good soil that can be improved through plant selection and crop rotation. In urban farming, it is advisable to favour species that produce crops

continuously. These plants include herbs, lettuces, radishes, and kale. Spinach grows at a rapid pace, and the crop must be harvested diligently before the plant can flower.

Diverse vegetation creates habitats and promotes the well-being of different species in urban environments. You can influence the diversity of the urban environment with plant choices. Flowering plants attract pollinators, which also benefits urban farmers.



Kohlrabi adds colour to the garden. Photo: Roosa Halonen



Flowering plants attract pollinators. Photo: Marja Roitto

IRRIGATION AND TOOLS

It all starts with planning and coming to an agreement over various details. Irrigation methods and shifts must be agreed in advance. Where do we get the water, and who does the watering? A watering rota helps with the division of labour. Most housing companies have a water outlet ready in the yard area. It is advisable to get a generously sized watering can. The water use must be agreed with the housing company.

Kastelu-
päivät

ke & su

18:00

... Tai ussainni!



KASTELUPÄIVÄKIRJA

SIJAINTI:

MERKKAÄ TÄHÄN RAKSILLA KUN OLET KÄYNYT KASTELEMASSA!

PVM	KESÄ	HEINÄ	ELO	SYYS
1		X		
2		X		
3		X		
4		X		
5		X		
6				
7		X		
8				
9		X		
10		X		
11		X		
12		X		
13	X			
14		X		
15		X		
16	X	X		
17		X		
18	X	X		
19	X	X		
20	X	X		
21	X	X		
22	X			
23				
24				
25				
26				
27	X			
28	X			
29				
30	X			

Photo: A watering rota in the stairwell of the house helps with the division of labour and prevents the plants from drying and doubling of work.

Photo: Roosa Halonen



The loaned cultivation box garden is suitable for all urban farmers, thanks to its ease of use and maintenance. Cultivation boxes can be installed in a weatherproof and maintenance-free cultivation module with a built-in irrigation system. Pre-planted boxes are delivered to the yard at the beginning of the growing season. Residents receive support for the management of the boxes, as well as weekly advice and tips. After harvesting, the boxes are picked up for maintenance and their soil is recycled for a new growing season.

- <https://www.blokgarden.com/yhteisviljely.html>

Children can also participate in urban farming. This way, they get information about where food comes from.

Photo: Markku Laine



Many residents only get excited about urban community farming when the farms are physically present, according to Blokgarden Oy, a company offering community farming solutions.

PHOTO: Markku Laine

The plant steps consist of modules that can be set to the desired shape. The growing system can be tailored to suit the space. The domestic Supragarden hydroponic farming system is also used in schools and restaurants.

- www.supragarden.fi

Salad bars are glass-walled, moisture-controlled, and heat-controlled cabinets with 80 pots of herbs and salad seedlings growing. They grow from seed to a harvestable crop in about five weeks.

- www.ifarm.fi

A mushroom bed is an outdoor farming solution for the production of mushrooms. The solution is suitable for shady places in the yard, such as the spaces under shrubbery. The substrate consists of wood (chips, pellet) and fungal mash, which are mixed together. After a single irrigation, the mushroom bed begins to produce oyster mushrooms about four weeks after planting. Shiitake mushrooms can be grown on birch logs. In this case, holes are drilled into the log and filled with fungal cluster pins. Finally, the holes are covered with gardening wax. The wood log will slowly begin to produce a shiitake mushroom harvest.

- www.helsieni.fi



The contents of the mushroom mycelium bag are mixed into a straw pellet bed. The oyster mushroom bed begins to produce edible mushrooms after 4–6 weeks, and the growth continues in the next growing season. Photo: Markku Laine

Indoor farming cabinets are automated hydroponic farming systems that can grow herbs and salads all year round. Growing in indoor farming cabinets is effortless; the water tank and nutrients are filled once a month. Cabinets are available in different sizes and can also serve as decorative interior elements. The contract includes service, inspections, and maintenance.

- www.evergreenwalls.fi

Innogreen, which provides green services, offers a range of products, including yard and garden design, in addition to green walls. Solutions are designed to conform to the limits set by space and time. Alternatives include a wide range of plants that are tailored to suit the site.

- www.innogreen.fi

4. The most commonly asked questions and many good answers

Can you grow food in the city, is it safe?

The concern of urban farmers may be whether the environment is clean enough to produce food. Potential contaminants include heavy metals, nitrates, and various organic compounds such as polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH compounds). In the city, the sources of emissions are transport, industry, and heating. In Helsinki, the concentrations of harmful substances in plants cultivated in the city were studied in 2019. Based on the results obtained, the growing of vegetables in yards, allotments, and on balconies in Helsinki is safe for the most part.

Consideration should be given when the soil in the yard of an apartment building is used as a growing medium, as harmful substances may have accumulated in it. In this case, the purity and suitability of the soil for cultivation should be determined before cultivation begins.

Is vandalism a problem in community gardens?

There is more fear of vandalism in community gardens than actual occurrences of vandalism. Based on urban farming experiments, plants were usually left alone. A good way to prevent vandalism is to put up a small sign in the community garden describing the cultivation. If there is recording camera surveillance in the area, the icon for this can also be used in this context.

Can a resident bring their own cultivation box to the yard of a housing company?

The yard is managed by a housing company, so permission for the placement of cultivation boxes, for example, must always be requested in advance.

Should a resident ask for permission from the housing company to set up a community garden?

Yes, permission is required. In the case of mutual procurement by residents, permission for the use of the space must be requested from the housing company. In a rental company, it is a good idea to proceed through the residents' committee. The contact person can contact the landlord of the building and negotiate the establishment of the community garden. A housing company does not need to ask for permission from the city, for example.

How does the decision to procure a community garden progress in a housing company?

The procurement for the community garden is carried out by the housing company. Small cultivation solutions are small purchases comparable to flower plantings in terms of price and size, in which case the procurement decision is made by the Board of Directors. If the proposal is larger and costly, the decision should be referred to the Annual General Meeting for a decision. If the Board of Directors is unsure, it is advisable to take the matter to the Annual General Meeting. It is a good idea to inform residents in good time about the community garden and its care.

How does the decision to procure a community garden progress in a rental company?

In a rental company, an annual appropriation is granted for resident activities on a property-by-property basis.

The residents' committee of the property decides on the use of this appropriation. If the rental company wants to use the appropriation for urban farming, they will procure the necessary supplies themselves or contact industry professionals.

Procurement by a resident/residents. Can the cost of inter-resident procurement be deducted using the tax credit for household expenses?

The precondition for the tax credit for household expenses is that the work must be directed to the resident's own home for work that is the responsibility of the resident/shareholder for maintenance (for example, an apartment or apartment yard), and the invoice must be addressed directly to the resident. The resident's tax credit for household expenses does not, therefore, cover the ordering of work for which the company is responsible for maintenance, and therefore the yard improvements for the housing company are not covered by the tax credit. When a housing company makes a purchase or when the residents make a joint purchase for the housing company, the gardener's or other similar labour costs are not covered by the tax credit for household expenses.

The cost to the residents? Should the community garden procured by the housing company be free of charge for the residents?

Each property decides on the fees for itself, much as in the case of the laundry room, which is free of charge in some housing companies and has a fee applied to its use in others. Sometimes a small fee may increase the commitment to the community garden, but then it would be good to keep the fee small enough so that it does not become a barrier to anyone. If the residents voluntarily acquire the plantation at their own cost (mutual acquisition by the residents) as a project of the shareholder minority, the housing company may not contribute to the costs at all.

Insurance and liability issues?

Before making a decision on the procurement of an indoor cultivation solution, the insurance cover and insurance conditions must be separately confirmed with the insurance company. With regard to insurance terms and conditions, for example, the existence of additional conditions and protection instructions must always be carefully verified. Moisture control is also important for ensuring safety. In the case of electrical equipment, the CE marking indicates that the product complies with the requirements of the EU regulations.

The responsible supplier has taken out liability and product liability insurance (product installation, equipment defects, and functionality) and has registered with the customer liability service, which shows that the requirements of the Finnish Customer Liability Act have been met and that liability for errors has been taken into account. However, liability does not apply in the event of vandalism.

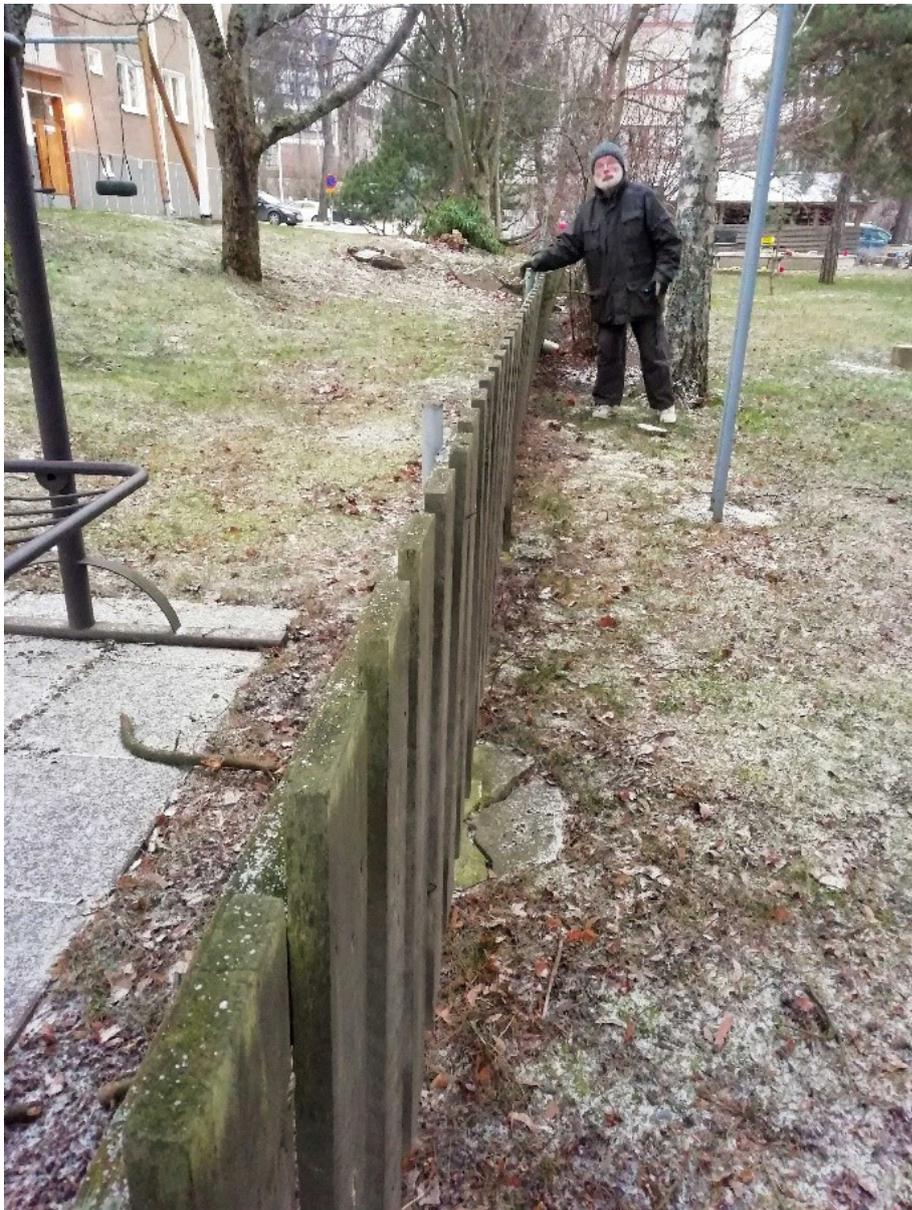
The procurement of indoor farming solutions is similar to the procurement of charging points for electric cars by means of a service model

(leasing). In a service model agreement such as this, it is important to specify what types of device defects are covered by the warranty agreement.

Depending on the risk of damage caused by the urban farming solution, it is a good idea to do a risk assessment with your technical manager or maintenance and service provider. The risk assessment also includes a contingency plan for damage.

If there is a fence between different yards of the building, can it be removed to make space for the community garden?

It is also worth proposing joint community gardens with the people of the neighbouring building. This may lead to the procurement of community gardens together with another housing company. If the fence between the yards is not necessary structurally or for privacy reasons, the intent to remove it can be discussed with the neighbouring housing companies. However, you cannot remove the structures belonging to the housing company by yourself. The matter must be discussed at the Annual General Meeting.



A fence between yards is not always necessary.
Photo: Marja Roitto

The decision to remove a fence is a common decision for housing companies, but the housing company on whose property the fence is, is responsible for removing it. In a best-case scenario, all the residents get to enjoy a larger courtyard area. It is possible that the old fence is even against the town plan, which means that it is worth checking with the city's Building Control Services.

Are there risks posed by indoor farming solutions?

Indoor farming solutions, such as circulatory systems, are based on closed water circulation and are suitable for indoor use. They are safe to use because the cultures are not connected to the tap, as the tanks are filled manually. Many hydroponic farming systems need less water compared to traditional production. However, the suitability of the intended space for urban farming, for example in terms of ventilation and drainage, must be checked and confirmed, for example, with a technical property manager before the garden is established.

Is the whole building farming? How are crop-related work and the crop itself distributed?

Each building can choose its own way of managing urban farming. In many buildings there are already various residents' committees and active residents who promote the realisation of urban farming. It is important that urban farming and cultivation is voluntary and accessible to all. Participation should be as easy as possible. People should be able to cultivate within the framework of their own resources, and no one should be burdened by commitment. Residents may have a common message group that discusses, for example, irrigation shifts and crop distribution. It is also advisable to use the housing company's notice board, for example, to fill in the irrigation diary.

6. An ABC of indoor farming

Innovative indoor farming solutions can also be introduced to housing companies on a small scale. With the help of an electrically powered indoor hydroponic farming system, housing companies can also be cultivating all year round. Indoor farming solutions are well suited to growing salads and herbs. In summer, too high a temperature can be a challenge. It is important that the room has adequate ventilation or a ventilation window.



Hydroponic farming is different from traditional soil farming, so starting it requires familiarisation. The plant steps, based on hydroponic farming, are suitable for the common spaces of apartment blocks. Solution developer Jouni Spets pictured. Photo: Markku Laine

In the hydroponic farming system, the nutrients needed by plants are transported to the roots of the plants by moving water. By optimising nutrients and growing conditions, plants get the right amount of nutrients at the right time, and the plants can focus all of their energy on producing the crop. Once the cultivation system is up and running, it is sufficient to add water and nutrients about once a week. The crop can be harvested just over a month after planting.

Because vertical farming allows efficient use of space, not much floor space is needed. With the help of energy-efficient LED lights, the plants even receive light in the dark seasons, as well. The system can be adjusted to use low-cost night electricity, so that the most efficient growth period for the plants takes place at night. The carbon footprint of indoor farming can be reduced by using renewable energy.



The cultivation experiment showed that the salad bar proved to be a very lucrative indoor farming solution. Residents were allowed to participate in the planting and to enjoy the food, salads, and herbs from the clubroom of the pilot building for many weeks. In the photo, iFarm's cultivation expert Alexander Moninkainen (left) and sales director Timo Koljonen.

Photo: Markku Laine

7. Away with you, pests and plant diseases!

The crop grows well and is enough for everyone, as the community garden prepares for extra gourmands.

The best way to combat pests and plant diseases is prevention. Healthy plants are more resistant to potential pest and disease attacks than plants that are in poor health. It is advisable to observe the vegetation throughout the summer so that the damage is noticed in time and there is time to prevent the issues before any major damage is caused. In a real situation, a smart gardener takes advantage of natural solutions for prevention.

To prevent snails and other gastropods from taking over the garden, it is advisable to clean up garden debris, pieces of boards, and other objects that collect moisture from their surroundings, as snails hide under them during the day and lay their eggs. If snails or other gastropods appear, it is worth picking them off individually and destroying them with hot water. To prevent them from spreading, it is a good idea to do a round of inspections in the garden every day, as at their worst, snails can lay hundreds of eggs. Commercial products containing iron phosphate are also available for effective and natural snail control. Community gardens may also attract brown hares, whose diet includes a wide variety of plants. Cultivation boxes are usually safe from city rabbits, but, if necessary, a plant net can be used to help protect the plants.



Photo: Leena Saraste

8. Common rules and communication

In order to succeed, community gardens need open and timely resident communication. It is good to invest in communication and make sure that all residents know what is happening and feel welcome. It is a good idea for the residents to agree on farming and cultivation practices in advance, such as how the plants will be taken care of during the holiday season. The building may have at least two weekly garden sessions, during which the residents gather to irrigate and care for the community garden together.



It is fair to distribute the crop to everyone, but of course those who have taken part in the farming are given priority. In order to achieve a sense of community, it is important to ensure equal access to the community garden for all residents. Photo: Roosa Halonen

9. The best recipes



Photo: Leena Saraste

Jyrki Sukula's Tuscan bread salad

(serves 4)

- 3 slices of old bread, preferably rustic style
- 2 tomatoes
- ½ gherkin
- 2 celery stalks
- 3 tbsp chopped red onion
- 3 tbsp chopped flat-leaf parsley
- 4 tbsp olive oil
- juice of one lemon
- torn basil leaves
- salt
- black pepper
- tabasco or mild red chilli

Split the tomatoes and cucumber in half, remove the seeds, and put the seeds in the bowl of a blender. Add the olive oil, lemon juice, and season with black pepper, chilli, and salt. Mix into a smooth sauce. Finely chop the bread with a knife, add the sauce to the bread, and mix well. Add the following to the bread mixture: sliced celery, cubed tomatoes, and cucumbers, as well as chopped red onion, basil, and flat-leaf parsley. Taste to check seasoning. Serve with cucumber-flavoured water.

Jyrki Sukula's nettle agnolotti in vegetable broth

(serves 8)

Pasta dough:

- 250 g fine wheat flour
- 6–8 egg yolks
- 1 whole egg

Mix the ingredients into an elastic, smooth, shiny dough. Leave to rest for approx. 20 minutes in the refrigerator.

Filling:

- 250 g nettle leaves
- 50 g sunflower seeds
- 3 tbsp soy sauce
- 5 tbsp grated parmesan
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- grated lemon peel
- black pepper

Agnolotti are small pasta pillows from the Piemonte region of northern Italy. Blanch the nettle leaves in boiling water for about 30 seconds, pour through a sieve, and cool the leaves by pouring ice-cold water over them. Strain. Brown the seeds in a pan with the olive oil, and add the soy sauce. Let the liquid boil away. Finely chop the nettles and seeds, mix together. Add grated cheese, season with lemon peel and black pepper.

Shape the pasta dough with a pasta machine or roller pin into a thin and long sheet. Cut approx. 4-cm-wide strips of the dough with a pasta wheel or knife. Place one teaspoon of filling on the pasta sheet every 3 cm. Lift and press the edges of the dough sheet against each other, and squeeze out the air between the fillings and close the pasta dumplings by hand. Cut the dumplings into individual filled pieces with a pasta wheel. Boil in salted water for approx. 2 minutes, and the agnolotti are ready to serve.

Vegetable broth:

- 1 celeriac
- 1 fennel
- 100 g mushrooms
- 1 carrot
- 1 onion
- thyme
- lovage
- bay leaf
- 1 tbsp light miso paste
- water
- 2 tbsp olive oil

Peel and roast the pieces of celeriac in a hot pan until brown. Do the same with the carrot and onion. Cut the fennel and mushrooms into pieces, sauté the vegetables quickly, and pour water over them so that they are covered. Cook slowly for about 40 minutes. Add the herbs and miso paste, do not boil, but let simmer for 20 minutes. Strain and taste for seasoning, add more seasoning if necessary.

Serve the broth with boiled agnolotti.

Ezme, Turkish tomato and paprika dish

Ezme is a staple of the meze service in the Middle East. It is a Turkish word, meaning crushed. Ezme is ready to serve right away. Dip (pita) bread in it or serve it as a side dish with various other dishes. Ezme can be eaten instead of salsa with nachos or tortillas. The extra ezme can be mixed in pasta sauces and used in a pizza.

- 3 larger or 6 smaller tomatoes
- 1 red bell pepper
- (half a cucumber)
- 1 onion
- 2 cloves of garlic
- small bunch of parsley
- small bunch of mint

Sauce:

- 1–2 tbsp tomato puree
- juice of half a lemon
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- ½ tbsp honey, or if you want a vegan version, use ½ tbsp agave syrup/sugar
- 2 tsp (roasted) paprika powder with a pinch of salt and crushed black pepper
- 1 tsp chilli flakes, Aleppo pepper, chilli paste

Start by chopping the tomatoes, onion, parsley, paprika, garlic and chillies as finely as possible, and transfer them to a bowl. You can strain the excess liquid in a sieve.

In another bowl, mix the sauce ingredients together. Mix the sauce with the chopped ingredients well. Taste for seasoning. The combination of sour and sweet is the key to this fresh and spicy salad. Add salt if necessary.

Chard pesto

- approx. 200 g (less than half a bag in the shop) of chard leaves (leaf stalks can be used, too)
- 1 handful of basil
- 1 handful of roasted almonds or cashew nuts
- approx. 1 dl olive oil
- juice of half a lemon or lime (plus grated peel)
- 1 clove of garlic
- 1 tbsp honey/agave syrup
- salt
- black pepper

Rinse the chard and slice it. Steam or blanch it quickly. Mix the ingredients into a paste in a blender or with a stick blender. Add salt, black pepper and olive oil to taste. Serve as a pasta sauce, on top of boiled vegetables, or with bread.

TIP for a quick Asian-style chard dish:

Rinse, slice or tear the chard, and quickly flash it in a pan in oil. Season with soy sauce and roasted sesame seeds. Enjoy it as a side dish with your meal.

Cabbage coleslaw (serves 4)

- 2 kohlrabi, approximately fist-size pieces
- 2–3 kale leaves
- 2–3 Tuscan kale leaves
- 1 (green) apple or grapes
- 4–6 radishes
- 2 tbsp cooking oil

Sauce:

- juice of 1 lime
- 1–2 cloves of garlic, crushed
- 4–5 tsp sweet chilli sauce
- 1–1.5 dl mayonnaise
- salt, pepper

Rinse the kale and Tuscan kale, remove the leaf stalks. Slice the leaves into thin strips, rub in oil and salt by hand. You can also mix all the ingredients in a bag by shaking the bag vigorously. Peel the kohlrabi and slice it into thin strips. Slice (and peel) the apple. Wash and slice the radishes (and the grapes).

Prepare the sauce. Mix all the ingredients together. Enjoy as is or serve as a side dish with fish or meat.



Tuscan kale leaves.
Photo: Freepik/Svetlana Cherruty.

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More information for urban farmers (in Finnish)

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More information about guides and instructions:

<https://www.siirtolapuutarhaliitto.fi/kaytannon-tietoa/viljelijan-tietopankki/oppaita-ja-ohjeita/>

Comparison of guides:

<https://suomenluonto.fi/uutiset/kaupunkiviljelykirjat-vertailussa/>

Associations:

Hyötykasviihdistys and their seed market: www.hyotykasviihdistys.fi

Dodo ry. <https://dodo.org/ruoka/> and <https://kaupunkiviljely.fi/>

Urban farming and environmental pollutants:

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More information about service providers:

www.blokgarden.fi

www.supragarden.fi

www.ifarm.fi

www.helsieni.fi

www.evergreenwalls.fi

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