



Urban Agricultural Guidelines & Becoming an Urban Ag Cooperator with the Prince George's Soil Conservation District (PGSCD)

Urban Agriculture Definition ([Subtitle 27: Zoning Ordinance](#)):

Urban Agriculture: *"Urban agriculture" is the cultivation of fruits, vegetables, flowers, and ornamental plants, as well as the limited keeping and raising of fowl or bees and similar activities in the urban environment or near residential, commercial, or industrial lands. Urban agriculture includes processing on the site of the farm where the agricultural product is grown or raised in the course of preparing the product for on-site sale, which may cause a change in the natural form or state of the product. This use also includes composting, agricultural education, and incidental sales. Urban agriculture production can occur indoors or outdoors, which may include, but is not limited to the following production methods: in-ground farming, raised-bed farming, hydroponics, controlled environment agriculture, rooftop farming, aquaponics, or edible landscaping. Common accessory structures may include, but are not limited to tool sheds, high tunnels, fencing, composting structures, and water cisterns. The term "urban agriculture" shall not include the keeping of roosters, commercial feeding of garbage or offal to animals, the slaughtering of livestock for marketing, or the disposal of sludge except for the fertilization of crops, horticultural products, or floricultural products in connection with an active agricultural operation or home gardening."*

Urban Farms must adhere to the following [requirements per the Zoning Ordinance](#):

1. Urban farms must engage in one or more of the activities outlined in the "Urban Agriculture" definition above.
2. On-site processing, composting, agricultural education, and incidental sales are allowed.
3. Farm fowl or poultry are the only livestock allowed. No roosters. Visit our Draft [Urban Farm Fowl FAQ](#) for best management practices and other resources, including how to register your flock with the state. Slaughtering livestock for marketing is prohibited.
4. Accessory structures are allowed but may require permits (i.e. shed, barn, washing station, pergola, walk-in cooler, greenhouse). PGSCD has arranged with the Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement (DPIE) to allow the installation of High Tunnel Systems (<5,000 sq ft) that have been approved by USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Contact PGSCD for details.
5. (C) [Urban Agriculture](#) – Requirements for Permitted Principal Uses
 - (i) A Health Department permit is required if fruits and vegetables are cut up or prepared foods are sold to the public.
 - (ii) [Landscape Manual](#) regulations do not apply to urban agriculture.
 - (iii) In the RSF-95, RSF-65, and NAC zones, an urban agriculture use shall comply with the following additional standards:
 - (aa) Urban agriculture shall not cause noxious odors or dust to drift off the premises;
 - (bb) Onsite signage shall be limited to one identification sign not exceeding six square feet in area, and interpretative signs educating attendees about urban agriculture, in accordance with Section [27-61500](#), Signage;

- (cc) Urban agriculture shall be maintained in an orderly manner, including litter removal, irrigation, pest control, and removal of dead or diseased plant materials. All garbage shall be removed from the site weekly;
 - (dd) Garbage and compost receptacles at an urban agriculture use, including buried compost receptacles, shall be screened from the street and [adjacent](#) properties by utilizing landscaping, fencing, or storage within structures;
 - (ee) An urban agriculture use shall obtain all necessary permits as applicable, including for accessory structures and signage,
 - (ff) Crop plantings shall be located a minimum of ten feet from the [front street line](#).
 - (iv) In the RMF-20 Zone, urban agriculture shall comply with the following additional standards:
 - (aa) An urban agriculture use shall not exceed five acres in size; and
 - (bb) No signage other than wayfinding and [directional signs](#) shall be posted.
6. Urban farms must be located in one of the following zones: ROS, AG, AR, RE, RR, RSF-95, RSF-65, RSF-A, RMF-12, RMF-20, RMF-48, CN, CS, CGO, IE, IH, NAC, TAC-C, TAC-E, LTO-C, LTO-E, RTO-L-C, RTO-H-C, TRO-H-E, RMH, LCD, LMXC, LMUTC (*Note: While all zones allow urban agriculture by right, there are [Use-Specific Standards](#). Click the link or see above for details.*)
7. Please note that urban farms are subject to Use & Occupancy permits if on vacant land. Please contact [Planning Information Services](#) at 240.545.8976 or PPD-InfoCounter@ppd.mncppc.org for more information.

Being a “Cooperator” with the Prince George’s Soil Conservation District (PGSCD):

While not required to operate an urban farm in Prince George’s County, the PGSCD suggests that urban farms use the following steps to establish their urban farm and provide creditability to their operations. Working with PGSCD provides useful technical benefits and may prove helpful with 1) code violations, 2) access to state and federal financial incentive programs, and 3) the Urban Ag Property Tax Credit.

1. **Contact the PGSCD’s Urban Agricultural Conservation Program (UAC)** at 301.574.5162 x3 or karlynch@co.pg.md.us. This is a voluntary program. PGSCD provides technical assistance along with its partners, the USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA). *PGSCD is not an enforcement agency.*
2. **Work with PGSCD to provide the appropriate information** (PGSCD can help with data collection):
 - Name and address of farm operator and location
 - Contact phone numbers and e-mail
 - Zoning of property
 - Tax Account ID, SDAT info
 - Total acres of property
 - Determination of [Urban Ag Property Tax Credit](#) eligibility
 - Plat or other documentation showing property lines
3. **Sign a [District Cooperative Agreement](#).** The simple, 1-page agreement documents that the individual or organization wants to “cooperate” with PGSCD’s efforts by developing and managing their urban farm in ways that reflect good soil conservation and water quality management practices.
4. **Contact USDA-Farm Service Agency (FSA)** to: 1) complete the AD-2047 form to establish your USDA customer service record and obtain your Farm and Tract number and 2) complete any eligibility paperwork to participate in USDA Programs. Visit [Get Started with Your USDA Service Center](#) for an

overview of the process. Contact Brian Wathen at the Prince George's County Service Center - 301.574.5162 x2 or brian.wathen@usda.gov when you're ready to get started with FSA.

5. Develop a Soil Conservation & Water Quality Plan (SCWQP) with PGSCD

- a. Schedule a virtual meeting with PGSCD's Urban Ag Conservation Program staff to discuss your goals and operation. A conservation planner will be assigned to you and will schedule a site visit to collect the following information:
 - Inventory of resource concerns that require the application of Best Management Practices (BMPs)
 - Inventory of structures and infrastructure (i.e. dwellings, sheds, raised beds, hydrants)
 - Square footage/acreage of cropping and associated ag areas
 - Type of urban ag operation and raw and value-added ag products, services provided
 - Proposed crops or expansion/future vision of operation
 - Information needed to document the Urban Agriculture Property Tax Credit if applying (see below for needed information)
 - Soil Health investigation
 - Identification of drainage areas and stormwater runoff (i.e. storm drain, drainage easement, retention pond, rain garden)
- b. Components of the SCWQP include:
 - District Cooperative Agreement
 - USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm & Tract No.
 - Location Map - aerial photo of entire property with property lines
 - Field delineations and acreage or square footage of each field
 - List of products grown and other agricultural activities
 - Soils map and report
 - Topographic map
 - Environmental Evaluations (NRCS CPA-52)
 - Conservation plan and map including existing and proposed BMPs
 - BMP implementation requirements
 - Copy of Nutrient Management Plan (if applicable) and soil tests
 - Review of urban agriculture legislation and zoning, buried utilities, soil testing (especially for heavy metals), and other resources
- c. Work with your conservation planner to see what federal, state, or county programs you may be eligible to receive financial assistance from to implement conservation practices.

6. Join the Bloomin' PGC [Google Group](#) and/or [Facebook Group](#) to connect with other urban farmers and agricultural service providers working with urban farmers. You're invited to attend Open Mic Nights.

Note: A SCWQP shall be kept on-file at the PGSCD office and shall be treated as private property of the landowner/operator. PGSCD will provide a copy to the landowner and/or operator upon completion. The SCWQP shall be updated as needed or, at a minimum, every 5 years.

Follow-up: PGSCD may contact the landowner/operator at least every 2 years due to the intense nature of an Urban Farm operation. Staff shall not visit the site without prior consent from the Cooperator.

Disclaimer: This document will be updated periodically and is subject to change without notice. Not all zoning ordinance updates may be reflected, so check with Planning Information Services for the most up-to-date information.

Visit our [Urban Agriculture Conservation Program](#) on our website for additional resources.