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## The Micro Farm Revolution:Think Small

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Category: Micro Farming

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With the demand for food on the rise, as well as the prices. Many people are literally taking this problem into their own hands. Micro farming is becoming the next big industry. This may be one of the few industries that will thrive in the next 5-10 years.

In an article from [Associated Content](#) <sup>[1]</sup>, they wonder where the great farmers of America have gone.

We are running out of food because we are running out of farmers. A nation that once boasted tens of thousands of hobby farms is now being fed by huge farm conglomerates, whose incentives for growing cash crops such as ethanol producing corn has taken from our basic food supply.

There are many descriptions of small farmers that are thrown around: organic, non-organic, natural. Yet the end result is always the same: the end producing result is food to eat.

### What Is a Micro Farm?

There is definitely a buzz about micro farms. Essentially, a micro farm is an independent farmer who operates on a small acreage. 15% of the worlds food comes from the micro farmer. Many people know of at least one person in their social network who has a garden that feeds families. Whether we have a small patio garden, a tiny backyard garden or a large garden, the point is we are producing food for ourselves, and sometimes food to share with others.

Starting a micro farm does not require much. Depending on the size of the land that is worked, depends on what tools are needed. Some only begin with the basics tools such as a rake, a hoe, a digging fork, a spade, and an earth seeder. Of course, as time goes on, many add to their existing tool inventory and stretch out their garden space in the process.

### Everything Is Used

The idea of a micro farm may seem too big for some. Remember the idea of this type of farm is a small – micro sized farm. One could have a self sustaining micro farm on land as small as an acre. Think of a backyard garden and expand on the idea. And with any garden, to begin a micro farm, carefully plan out the crops that will be planted and materials that will be needed. Look into [companion planting](#) <sup>[2]</sup> and see if any can be planted.

**Companion planting** is the planting of different crops in close physical proximity (in gardening and agriculture), on the theory that they assist each other in nutrient uptake, pest control, pollination, and other factors necessary to increasing crop productivity.

Source: Wikipedia

Many use companion planting in organic gardens to let nature do most of the work instead of chemicals. In theory, using this type of gardening, essentially creates an agroecosystem. Nothing goes to waste and everything is interdependent. The bi-products of these plants (dead heads, frail looking plants, etc.) can be used as soil conditioners. This makes for great efficiency and good use of space.

### Make The Most Of Your Space – Plan Out An Agroecosystem

- A compost area should be near the garden or crop area to fall over when additional nutrient rich soil is needed.
- Include a nearby animal pen to hold livestock (horses, sheep, chickens, etc) where manure can be used to fertilize the soil with.
- A water source near the main area of the garden is good to have to assist in watering the produce and compost heap. If the source is a natural water source, such as a small fish pond, this will infuse the soil naturally with fertilizers.
- Shipping pallets can be used to make raised or floating garden beds that will hold the common vegetables for the family. Raised beds can be placed right over the grass where it is accessible to water sources and composting sources. Raised beds have long been praised for their ability to produce larger plants in a faster amount time. This is mainly due to the warmer soil temperature in a raised bed as opposed to the “in ground” method where the soil is cooler. Another point is that since the beds have raised sides, they are better at keeping out unwanted insects such as slugs and snails.
- Have a large section of the garden to use for in ground plants. These are usually larger plants such as corn. Use companion planting in this section.
- If the garden is already fenced in, use the fence as a support for vine growing plants such as grapes, beans, blackberries, etc.

### Grow Some Food and Save Some Cash

With the increasing food prices that are slowly eating budgets across the county, many will turn to growing their own produce. There is difficulty for many finding the space to have a self sustaining garden. Where there is a will, there is a way. Look for local community gardens, or find a friend and share their yard. Even if a person is living in a small apartment, they can grow a small garden on their patio/balcony.

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[1] Associated Content:

[http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/800925/micro\\_farming\\_americas\\_next\\_big\\_gro\\_cat=3](http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/800925/micro_farming_americas_next_big_gro_cat=3)

[2] companion planting :

<http://www.companionplanting.net/ListofCompanionPlants.html>

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