



Imagine eating a fresh salad grown on your own roof, staircase or balcony!

Rooftop gardens empower urban residents to produce their own food, green neighbourhoods and build new community relationships.

A community initiative from:



**Action and Communication Network
for International Development**

www.alternatives.ca

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**La popote intergénérationnelle
Building an intergenerational community**

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The Rooftop Garden project receives financial support from the EJLB Foundation and the City of Montreal's Social and Community Development Services.

Liberating spaces for healthy cities



Cherry tomatoes, basil and flowers flourishing on a Montreal rooftop

A simple new solution

Rooftop gardens are an **innovative** way to green small urban spaces such as roofs, balconies and terraces. By using **extremely efficient** soil-less growing techniques, they require as little as one-tenth of the water used by conventional gardens, and can be four times as **productive**.



Fresh vegetables growing without soil

Soil-less gardening is not new; it is called hydroponics (derived from the Greek words for water working), where plants are fed only by nutrients dissolved in water. We have developed a simplified version of hydroponics that uses affordable materials and human power. By draining the gardens in the fall, **no additional strain is put on the roof** when winter snow-loads arrive.

Why garden on our city's rooftops?

Gardening is **Canada's most popular hobby**, but many people living in large cities do not have a garden to participate in this enriching and healthy activity. At the same time, our communities struggle to achieve **urban greening** in increasingly densely populated cities. Rooftops offer vast unused areas that can easily be converted to gardens and green spaces.

Greener cities...

Besides offering health benefits to gardeners, these gardens can play a major role in **improving our environment**. Rooftop gardens reduce pollution from stormwater runoff by capturing and using rainwater. Covering a rooftop with plants filters out air pollution and reduces air-conditioning costs in the host building. These gardens can be built and maintained with recuperated building materials and kitchen waste, which **reduces solid waste production**.

...are healthier cities

Rooftop gardens can be designed to suit the needs of **private homeowners, tenants and community gardening** groups. They help people to create new community spaces at sites that would otherwise be left vacant. Neighbours working together, engaging in a physically and mentally enriching past-time, strengthen links within the community. As people garden, they also reconnect with the ecological cycles upon which all food production depends.

Greening roofs and nourishing the community



Filling the city with vegetation

Santropol Roulant and **Alternatives** are collaborating to make widespread rooftop gardening a reality in Montreal.

Together we are promoting a **healthier model for urban food security** by introducing a new way to produce food locally and empowering people to harvest fresh vegetables within the city.

Build your own rooftop garden

Imagine eating a fresh salad that you grew on your roof, balcony or staircase over the summer. Rooftop gardening can make this a reality. Together, we can help you grow a **wide range of vegetables** such as tomatoes, lettuce, peas, beans and cucumbers.

Even your rooftop...

Light-weight soil-less gardens are **easy to maintain** and can be adapted to almost **any available space**. **Renters and homeowners** can build small and affordable gardens suited to their own needs and interest.

Institutions, such as **schools**, can convert their rooftops to **community gardens**, offering nearby residents new garden plots. This not only strengthens the institution's links to the community, it also decreases air-conditioning costs within the building, making it a win-win relationship.

...can become a garden

All that you need to **make your own garden** is access to an available space, some basic knowledge, and the desire. Our team of trainers and coordinators will equip you with the skills, and a simple start-up kit. From there it is just a few simple steps to turn your rooftop or balcony into a garden filled with luscious fresh vegetables. By adding some flowers, you can also make a beautiful rooftop terrace.

Green your neighbourhood

Over the past three years, many ideas for rooftop gardening have been developed and tested on a garage roof in the Petite Patrie neighbourhood of Montreal, as well as in Mexico and Morocco. This work has highlighted ways in which **our cities can be more ecologically friendly**, such as capturing and using rainwater, making compost to supply nutrients, and reducing energy consumption.



Spiral staircase garden, 2003

Soil-less gardens have been **proven** environmentally sustainable, economically viable, and easily **adaptable to most rooftops, balconies, and even Montreal's characteristic spiralling staircases**.

Bringing rooftop gardening to Montreal

This summer, **Alternatives**, **Santropol Roulant** and a range of other partners are building a **major demonstration garden** on the roof of the University of Quebec's TéléUniversité (TelUQ) building. This 500 square meter garden, situated in the heart of the densely populated Plateau-Mont Royal neighbourhood, will be coordinated and maintained by Santropol Roulant volunteers, providing vegetables for their meals-on-wheels service.



The demonstration garden is also a **promotion and education centre** for community members and volunteers. Our team is holding workshops in the garden, empowering participants to build similar gardens in their own homes. At the workshops start-up kits will be available to help people across Montreal convert their rooftops to lush and productive gardens.

Alternatives

www.alternatives.ca



Alternatives responds to the needs and ideas of progressive Canadians, who are working together **to counter poverty, racism and social exclusion** in Quebec, Canada, and around the world. Rooftop gardening offers new options for communities to introduce a healthy and enjoyable activity that can improve the quality of life for urban residents, and encourage cooperation between Canada's diverse ethnic and social communities. Alternatives is expanding the scope of the project, working with the urban poor in developing countries to use rooftop gardening as a new income generating activity.

Santropol Roulant

www.santropolroulant.org



Through an innovative meals-on-wheels service, intergenerational activities and volunteer programs, Santropol Roulant **provides enriching social experiences** and aims to address the health and food security needs of seniors and Montrealers living with a loss of autonomy. Santropol Roulant, founded by young people, and is firmly grounded in the local community and houses a successful and unique volunteer program. They will be coordinating the rooftop garden volunteers, organizing events at the garden for the Santropol Roulant community, establishing a compost for kitchen waste, and using the garden produce for the meals-on-wheels services.

Supporting Partners

The City of Montreal

The Social and Community Development Services of the City of Montreal is providing the Rooftop Garden project with financial and logistical support to promote urban agriculture in Montreal.



Terres Urbaines

Terres Urbaines is a not-for-profit business that focuses on improving the urban environment through greening initiatives in Montreal neighbourhoods.



The University of Quebec

The University of Québec has provided a 500 square meter space to host the demonstration garden, and will contribute a range of expertise.



The Urban Ecology Centre

The Urban Ecology Center, along with the Milton Parc coop, is promoting rooftop gardening through public workshops.