

# Starvation by Regulation: Farming Bans And Clever Work-Arounds

2016-04-11 08:58:36 By Theresa Crouse

It used to be your right to openly grow a garden or have livestock in your yard if you so desired, but the laws are now so strict that, for many of us, growing our own food when living an urban life is nearly impossible.

The government has slowly made it illegal to be self-sufficient all in the name of public and personal health and safety.

In fact, if things were to go south today, many of us wouldn't be able to feed ourselves with fresh food because the laws today forbid it. However, as any experienced prepper will tell you, there are work-arounds if you're willing to look for them.

Read this article to find out more about a few anti-gardening and farming laws and how to get around them.

## Watering Your Plants

Again, "for the good of the community", cities often limit the use of water for gardening or watering your lawn, especially in summer, and this is due to limited water supplies. Some people are fortunate enough to have an old well on their property that allows them to circumvent the restriction but for most people, defying the ordinance means facing a fine if caught. This requirement is hard to face when trying to grow your own food.

## Work-Around

Use grey water, or catch rain water if you are allowed to. Grey water is water that you use in your house that doesn't contain any type of bodily waste or hazardous material. The two easiest ways to use this grey water on a small scale are to save your warm-up water and recycle your wash water.

We waste literally hundreds of gallons of water per year waiting for it to get hot for showers or washing dishes. That water is perfectly clean and running it down the drain is part of the reason the restrictions are in place to begin with. Catch it in buckets and use it to water your garden. Washing machine water can be re-routed and used to water trees and larger plants, too. There are some rules that you need to follow to use this water safely, though.

Rain water can easily be caught in barrels, then used to water plants, if rainwater usage is legal in your state. Don't let it sit for too long though, because it can grow stagnant and attract unwanted bugs such as mosquitoes.

## Yard Regulations



***This garden is filled with easy-to-grow veggies.***

tomato	cucumber	pole beans	pole beans
broccoli	broccoli	pepper	pepper
beets	cabbage	spinach	parsley
onions	leaf lettuce	carrots	radishes

**[boogardening.blogspot.com](http://boogardening.blogspot.com)**

Most cities have regulations about how you can keep your yard.

Gone are the days of you being the king (or queen) of your castle; you have to keep your yard looking

a certain way so that it maintains “curb appeal”.

In other words, it doesn't matter if you own the place, you can't grow squash if your city thinks it's ugly.

Homeowner's Associations are even worse; they have to follow city laws but can also make stricter regulations that can quite literally get you evicted from your own house if you don't follow them.

Of course, this is partially your own fault if you bought the property after these rules were in place, but communities often come under the rule of homeowner's associations after people are already living there.

In this case, you're going to have to be smarter than they are. Fortunately, that usually won't be too hard.

## Work-Arounds

The easiest ways to get around these laws are to grow privacy hedges or put up a privacy fence, at least in the back yard.

You need to be careful here, because many cities require that you provide open access to water mains; thus your front yard can't be fenced in.

Another good work-around is to use raised beds or vertical gardens; they're attractive and you can plant edible ornamentals in them to give them even more curbside appeal.

## Compost Piles

Now, I understand that compost piles can be a bit visually off-putting, but then again, so can your chubby neighbor while he's mowing his lawn with no shirt on. Unfortunately, there's no law against that, though there probably should be. There are often laws against composting, though.

One of the primary reasons composting is banned in many places is because of the odor. Properly tended, a compost pile shouldn't smell like anything other than dirt unless you're composting manure in it. If your compost pile smells, it's likely not heating up enough for the organic material to break down. It could also be that you're adding the wrong things to your pile.

Even if it's legal, many towns have regulations about the size of compost piles or regulations that require a certain distance between your compost pile and your neighbor's house or property line. That makes it difficult for many “townies” to have one due to the size of their lot. In numerous communities, outdoor compost piles are illegal, no matter how small it is or where you put it.

## Work-Around

You can, of course, go before city or community councils and make a movement to fight the regulation, and you may win. You also have the option to have a smaller compost bin inside, often under your sink. This is a great option to cultivate fertilizer for your flower beds or raised gardens. It also gives you experience on a small scale so that if SHTF, you'll already know your stuff.

## Livestock Laws

Keeping livestock, even something as small as chickens, is often prohibited within city limits. There's not really a good work-around for this other than to connect with local farms that may be willing to let you keep some animals on their land if you cover the expenses. Co-ops are also an option as they offer the opportunity to get a variety of vegetables, and often meats, on a regular basis.

You probably won't be able to raise a calf in your back yard, but if you really want chickens, you may be able to get away with a few using a privacy fence. You'll have to keep the coops extremely clean so that they don't smell and offend the neighbors to the point that they complain to authorities.

## Urban Farming Laws

This is kind of a catch-all description of the way that government restricts farming and gardening. Most cities, and counties, are zoned in a manner that restricts what can happen on particular parcels of land in specific areas.

The entire city (or county) is divided into zones, including farming, commercial, and residential zones. Depending upon your zone, you're restricted to, and from certain activities. For example, in a residential zone, you likely won't be allowed to operate a business.

These zoning laws seriously affect people who want to farm. Fortunately, many cities are now revising these laws and relaxing what types of gardening and farming activities are allowed, but there's still a long way, and thousands of cities to go before you're allowed to openly garden or farm in a zone that doesn't permit it.

Most of the work-arounds described above apply to this problem, but you may still be subject to fines and could be ordered to destroy your gardens or get rid of your animals. The most pro-active thing that you can do is to start a movement toward acceptance of urban gardening in your community. The squeaky wheel gets the grease.

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By RESHMA KIRPALANI · July 12, 2011

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The fact is, gardening and prepping is becoming much more main-stream than it was even 5 years ago. Some people garden as a means of knowing exactly what they're putting in their bodies and others, like us, have gardens that produce food to feed us now, and in case of emergency.

Because of this shift from covert to main-stream, urban farming laws are changing and you have the ability to help facilitate that change in your area. This doesn't mean that you have to let your neighbors know about the cellar or the bunker that you have hidden out back, but you can give things a nudge in the right direction by gathering with like-minded people to get the laws changed.

If that fails, continue as you've been doing and just be smart enough to find the loopholes and work-arounds that are there if you're determined enough to find them. There's no government agency planning to rescue you in the middle of chaos or giving you and your family the food that you need to survive. The only thing they really plan about you is starvation by regulation.



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