

Got a green thumb? Here are 3 Twin Cities community garden organizations looking for volunteers this spring

By Suzanna Viau

Americans in urban communities turned to gardening during the COVID-19 pandemic, but even as we emerge from a global pandemic community gardening will continue to serve as a tool to fight racial injustice and build community. The Twin Cities is especially unique as an agricultural hub as well as the location of social justice movements over the past year. Working in a community garden can benefit you and your community by introducing you to community members from different backgrounds, producing food for you or those in need, and improving the green spaces around you. I had the opportunity to work as a summer intern for a community garden organization last year and grow food for community members while engaging in important conversations about race, class, and injustice right here in the Twin Cities. It was a rewarding summer, and the organization I worked for is just one of many locally. There are a variety of gardens and organizations throughout the Twin Cities, so here are three that are looking for volunteers this spring into summer.

[Growing North Minneapolis](#)

Growing North Minneapolis (GNM) is a community-based organization in partnership with the University of Minnesota. They have an intergenerational approach that encourages community elders, members, and student to work together and learn from one another. GNM works in a variety of garden spaces throughout the North Minneapolis neighborhoods including empty city lots, privately owned lots, at North High and within community garden spaces. In the summer they hire university interns and high school aged youth from the City of Minneapolis run Step-

Up program. This variety of people and gardens means you can work with GNM to find a volunteer opportunity that is close in proximity to you as well as work with a variety of youth.

[Frogtown Farms](#)

Frogtown farms is an urban demonstration farm located in the Frogtown neighborhood of St. Paul. They pride themselves on being a haven for individuals who want “learning, innovation, reflection, celebration, and authentic community.” The 13 acres that the farm is situated on also serves as a park and a natural area for community members. Their values include justice, resilience, and healing all through agriculture. If you are interested in volunteering, they suggest being 14 years or older and being prepared to get dirty!

[Urban Roots](#)

This St. Paul organization has Market Garden, conservation, and Cook Fresh programs to engage youth. The Market Garden serves as a youth-run community supported agriculture (CSA) program where youth plant, maintain and harvest produce. They operate out of six garden sites and several local parks. Volunteers in the market garden can help prep gardens by spreading compost, raking, and weeding, or even harvesting later in the season.

These three organizations are just a few of the many opportunities to serve your community and get your hands dirty in 2021. In times of unrest and uncertainty reconnecting with the food you eat and the people you live near can be a great way to find balance and purpose. Let’s grow some food Twin Cities!