

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



The Rooftop Garden Project empowers urban residents in Montreal, and around the world, to produce their own food, green their neighbourhoods and build healthy communities.

A community initiative from:



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Liberating Spaces for Healthy Cities

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 where they can participate in this enriching and healthy activity. At the same time our increasingly densely populated cities are struggling to become greener. By accessing the vast unused areas on inner-city rooftops, we can create new gardens and green our cities.

A simple new solution

Soil-less gardening is an innovative way to green small urban spaces such as rooftops, balconies and terraces. The gardens are extremely efficient, requiring as little as one-tenth of the water used by conventional gardens, and can be four times as productive.



Soil-less gardening is not new; it is called hydroponics, 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.

Soil-less gardening is ideal for rooftops. The growers can be drained in the fall ensuring that no additional strain is put on the roof when winter snow-loads arrive.



Flowers, beans and basil flourishing on a Montreal rooftop

Greener cities...

Besides offering health benefits to gardeners, **rooftop gardens can play a major role in making our cities more ecologically friendly.** Covering rooftops with plants filters-out air pollution and reduces air-conditioning costs in the host building. The plants also capture and use rainwater, thus reducing pollution from stormwater runoff. Rooftop gardens can be built and maintained with recuperated building materials and kitchen waste, which discourages 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.



Trial rooftop garden on a Montreal garage

Greening Roofs and Nourishing the Community

Build your own rooftop garden

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



Enjoying rooftop gardening at home

Even your rooftop can be a garden

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

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

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 can help you find the materials and teach you our simple techniques. From there it is just a few simple steps to turn your rooftop or balcony into a garden filled with luscious fresh vegetables.

Adaptable to any space



Spiral staircase



Apartment balcony



Home or garage rooftop



A thriving partnership: Alternatives and Santropol Roulant's demonstration garden in Montreal

Bringing Rooftop Gardening to Montreal

Alternatives and **Santropol Roulant** are operating a major demonstration and research garden on the roof of a University of Quebec building. This 500 square meter garden, situated in the heart of the densely populated Plateau-Mont Royal neighbourhood, is 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. **Our team is holding workshops and training events, empowering participants to build similar gardens in their own homes.** By providing start-up kits, manuals and expert advice, we are helping people across Montreal convert their rooftops and balconies into lush and productive gardens.

A workshop in the demonstration garden



Sharing our Experience with the World

The soil-less gardening techniques used in our Montreal garden hold great potential around the world. In places where water or land is limited, they can be introduced to offer **a new source of income for the urban poor.**

Alternatives and **Santropol Roulant** are working closely with partners in Mexico, Cuba, Senegal, Morocco and Nepal to exchange ideas and share experiences. Many of the techniques used in Montreal have been adapted and innovated through these exchanges, and we are cooperating to establish new research and demonstration centres where we can share our experiences with our international partners.

Experimental garden in Dakar, Senegal



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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. Alternatives is promoting rooftop gardening as a new opportunity for urban residents around the world to engage in a healthy and enjoyable activity that can improve their quality of life and encourage cooperation within communities. Alternatives is expanding the scope of the project, working in developing countries to use rooftop gardening as a new income generating activity.



www.santropolroulant.org

Santropol Roulant brings people together across generations and cultures through our innovative meals-on-wheels service, our intergenerational activities and our volunteer programs. **We address the health and food security needs of seniors and Montrealers living with a loss of autonomy**, while engaging a diversity of people to take an active role in their community. Santropol Roulant is firmly grounded in the local community and houses a successful and unique volunteer program. The Rooftop Garden Project allows us to extend our work in food security in exciting new ways while bringing our unique organizational culture into the arena of environmental sustainability.