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Jesse Ricke

Brooklyn Progressive Examiner



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Brooklyn's fertile urban farm movement

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the rooftop farm with Manhattan skyline
Photo: taken by What Were the Skies Like

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2010 has been a difficult year for many in the country, the city, and the borough. But among the year's good news for Brooklyn is the rise in urban farming as evidenced by several programs that have arisen and thrived this past year.

The recent announcement by [Kingsborough Community College](#) marks the first foray into student cultivated farming in New York. The college aims to manage the farm as a semester class beginning Fall 2011. It will be managed by students as an extracurricular activity until then. The project is funded by DeLoach Vineyards in California, itself an organic cultivator and manufacturer of wines. "We don't impose our rhythm on Nature," says Proprietor Jean-Charles Boisset. "The key is to listen, respect and live within Her." The Kingsborough farm hopes to attract community members to collaborate on the farm with students, enlarging the scope of the farm's impact.

A high school set the pace for the University in February when the [High School for Public Service](#) in East Flatbush announced plans for their urban farm. They have since broken ground and are producing about 500 lbs of fresh vegetables a week. The school sells their produce at local

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farmer's markets and exchanges it with other schools for compost and supplies.

Urban farms are feats of technology and social organizing. Case in point is the [Eagle Street Rooftop Farm](#) which began this April. The roof base system and growing medium was designed by Goode Green, a greenroof design company with projects across the city. Eagle Street holds a Sunday market and collaborates with other growers in Brooklyn including [Added Value](#) and BK Farmland. Images from the farm will be featured at a photo and illustration exhibition tomorrow night, December 10th, at [The Commons](#) on Atlantic Ave.

Another art/farming crossover event is being held throughout December at [The Atlantic Gallery](#) on 29th St in Manhattan. The event benefits [Just Food](#), an organization connecting urban farms and food justice efforts in New York. With so many neighborhoods beyond the reach of fresh food, this organization has been working to encourage sustainability and health since 1995. They just received the Neighborhood Builder's award for 2010 last month.

Such sustained activity around a like cause sees Brooklyn fast becoming a forerunner in the urban farm movement. In 2008, UN delegates toured Brooklyn urban farms as a part of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development. That was the same year the human population officially became more urban than rural, with the majority now living in cities. Brooklyn urban farms are showing the world how to navigate that historical change.

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