

Urban farming on the rooftops of Southeast Asian cities

Reading · B2 · Article

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Rooftop Farms Spread Across Southeast Asian Cities

Rooftop farms in Southeast Asian cities provide fresh food and green spaces for residents.

Urban farming on rooftops has become popular in Southeast Asian cities. Residents grow vegetables on building tops where ground space is scarce. In Jakarta, community groups have set up gardens that provide fresh produce to nearby shops. These setups use light materials to avoid damaging roofs. The plants help lower temperatures inside the buildings. People work together on the farms and learn new skills. This approach makes good use of empty spaces in busy areas. They also enjoy the fresh air while working outside.

These rooftop farms bring important environmental benefits to the cities. They create green spaces that clean the air and support small wildlife. The plants absorb rainwater and reduce flooding on streets during heavy rains. A farm in Manila uses recycled bottles for planting, which cuts down on waste. The gardens keep buildings cooler so less energy is needed for air conditioning. This helps lower the overall temperature in the urban area. Experts believe more farms would improve living conditions for residents.

Rooftop farms also strengthen community bonds in Southeast Asian cities. Neighbors meet on the roofs to plant and harvest crops together. In one Bangkok project, families share the work and divide the vegetables at the end of each season. This cooperation teaches children about nature and healthy eating. The farms become places for social events and learning new methods. People feel more connected to their food sources and gain a useful break from city stress.

One successful example is a large rooftop garden in Singapore that supplies herbs to local restaurants. The project started with a few families and grew into a business that employs several workers. They use special containers filled with light soil and water from rain collection systems. The garden produces fresh items all year and sells them at nearby markets. This shows how urban farms can create jobs while meeting the demand for local food in crowded areas.

Farmers on rooftops often use simple techniques that suit city conditions. They grow plants in pots or raised beds made from wood and plastic. Some add fish tanks below the beds so the water from the fish feeds the plants. This method saves water and space at the same time. Workers check the soil often and add natural compost from kitchen waste. These steps keep the farms productive without needing much money or advanced tools.

Although rooftop farms face challenges like strong winds and limited water, groups find ways to solve them. They build low walls around the edges to protect the plants and use timers for watering during dry periods. In several cities, local authorities now offer advice and small grants to help new

projects start. With these supports, more people can join in and expand the farms. The result is a growing movement that improves food supply and life in the cities.

1 Multiple Choice

Read the passage. Choose the correct answer (a, b, c or d) for each question.

- 1 The passage suggests that rooftop farming is suitable in Southeast Asian cities for what reason?
 - a) The government requires all buildings to have gardens
 - b) Residents have extra money to spend on materials
 - c) Vegetables grow better at higher altitudes
 - d) Ground space is scarce so empty roof spaces can be used
- 2 What does the passage imply about the effect of rooftop farms on city flooding?
 - a) They have no effect on water during rains
 - b) They make flooding worse in the streets
 - c) They help reduce flooding by absorbing rainwater
 - d) They cause more water to collect on roofs
- 3 What can be inferred from the Bangkok project about community involvement?
 - a) The project is only for one season
 - b) Families share the work and divide the vegetables
 - c) Only children are allowed to work on the farms
 - d) Families work separately and keep their own vegetables
- 4 What does the Singapore example show about the potential of rooftop farms?
 - a) They stop producing during certain months
 - b) They need special soil from outside the city
 - c) They can develop into businesses that employ workers
 - d) They remain small projects run by families only
- 5 According to the passage, what do local authorities do to support new rooftop farm projects?
 - a) They offer advice and small grants
 - b) They build low walls to protect the plants
 - c) They use timers to water the plants
 - d) They check the soil and add compost

2 True / False / Not Given

Do the following statements agree with the information in the passage? Tick (✓) True, False or Not Given.

	True	False	Not Given
1 Rooftop gardens in Jakarta provide fresh produce to nearby shops.	☐	☐	☐
2 A rooftop farm in Manila was started by local students.	☐	☐	☐
3 Families in Bangkok share the work and divide the vegetables from a rooftop farm.	☐	☐	☐
4 The rooftop garden in Singapore employs only family members.	☐	☐	☐

3 Short Answer

Answer each question using no more than three words from the passage.

- 1 In which city have community groups set up gardens that provide fresh produce to nearby shops?

- 2 Which city has a farm using recycled bottles for planting?

- 3 In which city do families share the work and divide the vegetables at the end of each season?

- 4 Which city has a large rooftop garden supplying herbs to local restaurants?

4 Cause & Effect

Match each effect (1–4) with its cause (A–D) based on the passage.

Cause	Effect	
A Community groups have set up gardens in Jakarta.	1 Waste is cut down.	
B Residents grow vegetables on building tops.	2 Fresh produce is provided to nearby shops.	
C The plants absorb rainwater.	3 Temperatures inside the buildings are lowered.	
D A farm in Manila uses recycled bottles for planting.	4 Flooding on streets during heavy rains is reduced.	

5 Note Completion

Complete the notes using no more than two words from the passage for each answer.

Environmental Benefits

Green spaces: clean the air and support small (1) _____

Flooding: reduced by absorbing (2) _____

Community Bonds

Work sharing: families share the work and divide (3) _____

Business Example

Singapore garden: supplies herbs to local (4) _____