

## Kristin Sewall

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**From:** Kanitz, Roger [Roger.Kanitz@kcc.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 11, 2010 2:11 PM  
**To:** linda.stoll@uwsp.edu  
**Cc:** 'Sadie Schroeder-Work'; Greg M. Keil; Kristin Sewall  
**Subject:** Fruit Tree Planting Option

Paul Burden returned yesterday and provided me with the attached article from USA Today (March 9<sup>th</sup>) on a potential variation of the community garden theme as part of our sustainability efforts. Pictures are from Madison!

He would like to convey it to the Menasha Sustainability board as it matches the native planting interest highlight in the back-casting session we did. It also reflects an aspect of gardening that I personally had over-looked.

Paul offered that this type of program could also be developed in conjunction with local food pantries, or wine making clubs, or pie making festivals or as just free food for the public. Open public areas could be populated with trees in groupings.

He also mentioned that there could be a twist where trees are planted by out of work folks as a jobs stimulus type activity on behalf of the city. Work related to planting and caring for the trees, or for converting its fruit into a food forms, might be a job source for enterprising individuals without the "free land" of our fore-fathers had as resource.

We have to give him credit as he keeps thinking about us!

Thanks... Roger

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2006 photo by Steve Apps, Wisconsin State Journal

City dig: Barbara Feeney and Frank Iltis plant a fruit tree at Jessica Bullen Orchard and Quiet Garden in Madison, Wis.

# More urbanites have their pick of fresh fruit

As free public orchards crop up in cities, lessons in sustainability and charity spread

By Ben Jones  
USA TODAY

Last fall, Eric Alperin, a San Francisco artist, heard about blackberries, plums and loquats growing on public property in his city and free for the picking.

Armed with bags and a pole device for picking fruit from tall branches, Alperin and his wife went foraging.

"It was great," he said. "We picked as much as we could carry and had



2006 photo by Laurence Kesterson, The Philadelphia Inquirer

Idea takes root: David Siller plants a tree at Woodford Mansion in East Fairmount Park in Philadelphia, a city where public orchards are more common.

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# As free public orchards crop up in cities, lessons in sustainability and charity spread

By Ben Jones  
USA TODAY

Last fall, Eric Alperin, a San Francisco artist, heard about blackberries, plums and loquats growing on public property in his city and free for the picking.

Armed with bags and a pole device for picking fruit from tall branches, Alperin and his wife went foraging.

"It was great," he said. "We picked as much as we could carry and had beautiful, fresh, free city fruit," Alperin said. "I'll definitely go (picking) again." Fruit-picking opportunities like that are becoming more common, as volunteers in cities including Boston, Detroit, Philadelphia and Madison, Wis., mobilize behind a goal of planting fruit trees on public land in city parks and neighborhoods.

"This is part of what's obviously been an explosion in interest in locally grown and organic food," said Janet Parker, a founding member of a group called Madison Fruits and Nuts. "I think we're coming to realize more and more that it doesn't make any sense, at this late date with climate change being what it is, to truck in so much of our food from California, in the cases of apples, sometimes New Zealand."

Free fruit also is available for picking in season on public land in Chicago, San Francisco, Austin, Minneapolis and New York, according to neighborhoodfruit.com, a site that helps people track down available fruit.

Parker works with other volunteers to add fruit trees to parks in her Wisconsin city, which has a population of 27,700. The group wants to initially plant trees in four parks and awaits city approval.

It seeks funding from a California-based non-profit, the Fruit Tree Planting Foundation, which helps establish fruit trees at parks and schools. Cem Akin, the foundation's executive di-



2018 photo by Laurence Kesterson, The Philadelphia Inquirer

**Idea takes root:** David Siller plants a tree at Woodford Mansion in East Fairmount Park in Philadelphia, a city where public orchards are more common.

rector, said fruit trees in parks are not new, but there's been "recent movement toward getting more trees into city parks, more free nutrition into city parks as well."

Akin said that in the past year, his group has been inundated with funding requests from cities and counties in California, Nevada, Georgia, Wyoming, Florida, Arizona and Vermont. The group will make funding decisions on these projects this year.

Since 2005, the foundation has provided trees and advice to planting projects in 20 states, Akin said.

"It's a good way to get the community mobilized. It's a good way to get everybody to learn about sustainability, about environmental stewardship and about botany," he said. "Our goal is to strategically donate and plant fruit tree orchards to areas where the harvest most benefits communities."

Akin said that in some cities, groups glean fruit from urban orchards and donate the produce to food pantries.

That's the plan for some of the fruit in urban orchards in Philadelphia. Since 2007, a group called the Philadelphia Orchard Project has helped establish 17 urban orchards in the city, including four on school property and one at a public park. Other orchards are planted on land owned by non-profit groups.

Orchard director Phil Forsyth said volunteers have planted about 200 trees.

"They are all over the city, generally in low-income neighborhoods," he said. "Community food security is part of our mission, so we partner with groups where the orchard will benefit people who would otherwise have limited access to fresh produce."

Creating a public orchard involves a lot more than sticking trees in the ground.

Laura Whitmore, community relations coordinator for Madison's parks division, said people who want to plant fruit trees in her city's parks must pay for the trees and do the work. First they must submit a planting, harvesting and maintenance plan and get city approval. She said the park must be appropriate for fruit trees. "We wouldn't be putting them in a soccer field," she said.

People looking for some free fruit can go to neighborhoodfruit.com, which maps the location of fruit trees on private and public land that are open for picking.

The site lists more than 10,000 fruit and nut trees in 25 cities. On Jan. 1, it launched a 99-cent iPhone application that helps people track down trees close to their locations.

"We're anticipating, as spring gets longer and as we get into summer, there's going to be a lot of interest in it," said Kaytea Petro, co-founder of the site.

Jones reports for *The Post-Crescent* in Appleton, Wis.

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