

## Urban agriculture aims to strengthen food security



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Home gardens and urban agriculture projects are becoming new hobbies for many Malaysians, due to the increased cost of living and food prices.

By self-planting vegetables and herbs, every family can produce their own food without the use of pesticides or other chemicals with low maintenance and low cost.

Senior Lecturer, Department of Land Management, Faculty of Agriculture, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Dr Adibah Mohd Amin said urban agriculture involves growing food within the city, which helps to produce fresh, nutritious food close to where people live and will reduce the dependency on long food supply chains, which can be vulnerable to disruptions due to natural disasters, transportation issues, or economic crises.

Dr. Adibah also believes that institutions such as UPM also play an important role when it comes to promoting urban agriculture to the public.

“Institutions need to create awareness to show the importance of food security in our country, for example make it compulsory for offices to have a rooftop or corridor section for urban agriculture,” she added.

She explained that the most grown vegetables and herbs in Malaysia, including chillies, sawi, onions, and chives, are easy to maintain, requiring only minimal care and regular fertilizers like food waste, making them nutritious and safe to consume without pesticides.

“If everyone just contributes some effort and spread awareness, we can eventually reduce the import of food materials like rice and vegetables from other countries.” she said.

She added, urban agriculture is gaining traction as cities worldwide explore innovative ways to ensure food security. By utilizing rooftops, community gardens, and vertical farming technologies, urban areas are transforming into sustainable food production hubs.

“Vertical farming is one of the popular techniques used in urban agriculture, it is done by using stacked layers to grow crops in compact spaces. It offers a space-efficient way to produce fresh food in densely populated cities.

“Other than that, hydroponics is another urban farming technique gaining traction in Malaysia. By growing plants in nutrient-rich water without soil, it uses less space and water, making it ideal for high-rise living,” she said.

This approach not only addresses the rising demand for fresh produce in urban centers but also reduces dependency on long supply chains, minimizing carbon footprints. Urban agriculture fosters community participation, creates green jobs, and promotes environmental sustainability.