

Activities

Go green

Sick and tired of fruit and veggies packed with pesticides? Hannah Hodson meets two people who grow their own



Growing fruit and veggies is popular all over Europe and America, but only recently have Hongkongers turned their backs on supermarkets and set up their own urban gardens. In a city as dense and vertical as ours, gardening is easier said than done. However, these two green fingered city folk are encouraging our next generation to grow their own for the sake of the planet.



Pol Fabrega is co-founder of Hong Kong's sustainable living and urban gardening enterprise, Rooftop Republic. The group provide three services.

Firstly, urban farm consultation, whereby they design and set up customised farms. Secondly, urban farm maintenance, to ensure the productivity of the farms and, finally, educational events to inspire lifestyle changes and sustainable living.

How did the idea for Rooftop Republic come about?

The team behind Rooftop Republic is amongst the pioneers of urban farming in Hong Kong, as we've been doing it for the past five years. Urban farming has been taking off in places such as the US and Europe in recent decades but it was still a fairly new concept in Hong Kong when we started. As born and bred city-dwellers ourselves, we realised how disconnected we and other city-dwellers around us are from our food. That matters to us because, ultimately, there will be negative consequences on our environment, our communities and health.

Who's on the team?

Rooftop Republic was co-founded by Andrew Tsui, Michelle Hong and me. We all have different professional backgrounds but have common passions: sustainability and social entrepreneurship. In 2015, we decided to take this to the next level and co-founded Rooftop Republic.

Are there opportunities for kids to get involved?

Plenty! Education is one of our main priorities and we work with schools to install farms within their

facilities and run educational programmes for their students and parents. Our school programmes are a first-hand opportunity for students to learn about the story behind their food and understand the steps, resources and people involved in bringing food from farm to table. Students also look into the future of farming and how design and technology can be applied to farming to integrate it better with our urban lifestyles. More broadly, our activities aim to increase students' awareness around environmental and social issues surrounding our food system and to better equip them to make informed choices about the food they eat.

Do you have any tips for families wanting to lead a more green and sustainable lifestyle?

There is nothing that we do as human beings that affects the planet more than agriculture. As consumers we have more power than we think, and we can vote at least three times per day what kind of food system we want to support. Find out where the nearest farmers market is and buy local and organic food. Some farmers even provide a vegetable delivery service to your door. It's better for you, your community and the environment!

Since March 2015, Rooftop Republic have had a major impact on Hong Kong.



19
Urban farms



Over 22,000
Square feet of installed farms



Over 300
Lunchboxes have been donated



Over 100
Workshops have been conducted



2,020
People have participated