

The Faces of Urban Forestry



Barb Burrill Volunteer Urban Orchard Steward

Trees Bring Healthy Food to Cities

Barb Burrill is a citizen, mother and self-described 'Seattle orchard steward.' When Barb noticed several abandoned fruit trees along an urban trail, she joined the nonprofit organization City Fruit, a model for citizen involvement in local food sources founded in 2008.

Through City Fruit, volunteers pull blackberries and ivy, harvest the fruit and conduct workshops, with the City of Seattle providing staff and equipment for larger scale projects and pruning. These collaborative efforts increase the availability of fresh, locally-grown fruit, as well as encourage home owners to plant trees of their own.

"Fruit trees provide a valuable food source right here in our community," Barb says.

In addition to its partnership with Seattle's Department of Parks & Recreation, City Fruit also works with the Washington Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Forest Service.

The organization's goal is to train volunteers to rehabilitate and care for the remnants of old orchards that are now in the city's parks. Were it not for critical staff support and funding, City Fruit would not have been able to turn abandoned city trees into a food source.

"It's amazing how quickly the reclamation happens," says Barb. "It is phenomenal how within one year of reclamation these trees are producing a lot of fruit." The fruit is then picked by the volunteers and distributed to food banks, senior citizen homes and schools.



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— Barb Burrill



Before



After

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A joint project of U.S. Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry, the National Association of State Foresters, and the Arbor Day Foundation. For more information visit arborday.org/faces