

# Make Money as an Urban Farmer!

A workshop presented by  
Sustainable Commercial Urban Farm Incubator (SCUFI) Program

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**February 19-20, 2011, 8am – 6pm, Berkeley, California**

**Lead Trainer: Curtis Stone**, of Green City Acres, an urban Small Plot Intensive (SPIN) farm in Kelowna, BC Canada.

**Curtis will share with you how he used the SPIN-Farming® system to build a multi-lot 1/2 acre urban farm that in its six month 2010 first season grossed \$20,000.**

Before starting his SPIN farm, Curtis had little experience gardening or farming. He'll show you how SPIN farming can be implemented effectively and inexpensively ... even in a harsh climate and short growing season like Kelowna!

**If Curtis can do it, so can you!**

Saturday: David Brower Center, Berkeley, CA, Indoor lectures and demonstrations  
Sunday: East Bay urban farm (location TBA), Outdoor hands-on field exercises

Workshop trainers will help you ...

- Learn about SPIN, and how the SCUFI program can assist you with training, financing, and securing land to launch your own profitable sustainable urban farm business, even if you have no previous farming or gardening experience.
- Meet people at the forefront of the growing sustainable commercial urban farm field, share ideas, gain knowledge, pool resources, plant seeds and form alliances to build your own high-income urban farm business.



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**Early registration:** \$200. After January 31: \$250.  
Snacks, beverages & lunch included

**To register:** <http://www.scufiworkshop.eventbrite.com>

**For a one-page flyer about the workshop:**  
<http://www.virtuallygreen.com/scufi/eventflyer.pdf>

**Questions? Email** [urbanfarms@virtuallygreen.com](mailto:urbanfarms@virtuallygreen.com)

**Workshop blog:** <http://virtuallygreen.com/scufis/>

# Workshop Topics

## Lecture, demonstration and field exercise topics

The indoor lectures and demonstrations Saturday at the David Brower Center, and the mostly outdoor hands-on field exercises Sunday at the urban farm site, will cover a wide range of topics, such as:

- Farm planning and design
- Soil and bed preparation
- High road/low road approach
- Walk-in cooler use
- Weed and pest control
- Season extension and hoophouses
- Marketing, sales and pricing
- Relay cropping
- Integrating farms into buildings and grounds
- Cost and revenue projections
- Bookkeeping and record keeping
- Crop selection and strategies
- Planting, cultivation and irrigation
- Harvesting & post-harvest processing
- Tools and equipment
- Selecting and securing land
- Food safety
- Agreements and contracts
- Insurance and legal
- Farm financing
- Workflow and ergonomics.

The topics will be covered at the workshop by a talented and knowledgeable team of trainers, including Curtis Stone.

**If you complete the two-day workshop you become eligible to apply for a training plot at a SCUFI site.**



# Reasons to Attend the workshop

**There are numerous reasons why people like yourself should attend the workshop.**

Below is a good selection. It's likely that one or more of them will appeal to you.

- You have urban land you'd like to farm.
- You're looking for urban farm partners.
- You want to own a profitable urban farm business.
- You desire financing for your farm.
- You're interested in using bikes for farm transport.
- You wish to make a good part-time or full-time income from urban farming.
- You'd like to talk and spend time with a successful commercial urban farmer.
- You need training to set up and run a successful commercial urban farm.
- You're interested in your neighborhood being a commercial urban farm community.
- You think sustainable commercial urban farming could create jobs and businesses in your city.
- You hope you can turn your love of gardening into an urban farm business.
- You're unemployed and need to make money for yourself and your family.
- You wish to integrate commercial urban farming into your buildings and grounds or housing project.



# Curtis Stone – Green City Acres

## The Farm

Curtis is owner/operator of Green City Acres, an urban SPIN farm in Kelowna, BC, Canada. Curtis farms six small urban plots totaling 1/2 acre. He uses front and backyards, rented from homeowners, to grow vegetables for sale in Kelowna. All of his produce is grown with organic methods, meaning no chemical fertilizers, sprays, or pesticides are used. His farm barely burns any fossil fuels and is mostly pedal powered. Curtis use bicycles with trailers to make restaurant deliveries, transport produce, get the farm booth to the farmers market, and move compost, tools, and his 400 lb. rototiller.



## The Mission

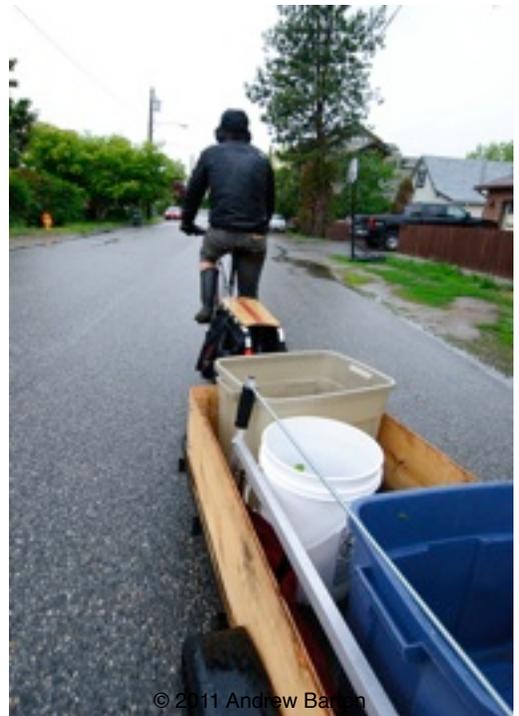
Curtis views his farm as both a business and a means of effecting social change. Green City Acres fosters social and environmental change through production of local food and by helping, teaching, and empowering people to grow their own. Curtis believes a transition from a petroleum based society is inevitable. Curtis demonstrates that working to change a food system that is environmentally destructive, socially inequitable and economically unsustainable can be easy, fun and profitable.

## The Farmer

Before starting to plan his urban farm in Fall 2009, Curtis had no prior experience farming or gardening. Up until 2008, Curtis lived in Montreal as a musician, playing in the band People For Audio.

Curtis left Montreal in March of 2008 to return to his home town of Kelowna. During a bike trip from Kelowna to San Diego in Fall 2008 he visited off-grid homesteads, ecovillages and urban farms. The trip inspired him to do something involving sustainable agriculture, but he wasn't sure what. A friend directed him to Spin farming. Once Curtis discovered there was a way to farm that required very little investment, and no need to own land or heavy machinery, he was confident that he could do it. He spent the rest of the Fall and Winter of 2009 studying SPIN farming and reading gardening and farming books before he decided to go for it. With a bit of money saved from a job tree-planting, he had everything he needed to start an urban farm. After completing a successful and profitable first season in 2010, Curtis is a case study proving that SPIN farming can be done by people who have no experience.

During the off season, Curtis works as a public speaker on food related issues and as a consultant for community food projects in Kelowna. In September 2010 he was awarded 'Gardener of the Year' from Kelowna's "Communities in Bloom" program.



For more info about Curtis and Green City Acres visit: <http://www.greencityacres.com/>



# Sustainable Commercial Urban Farming

## Commercial urban farming

The SCUFI program trains people for commercial urban farming. Commercial urban farming is different than home or community gardening, in many of the same ways that running a restaurant business is distinctly different from cooking at home for family. The SCUFI program trains people to grow vegetables and fruits and make a good income supplying the affordable, healthy fresh food to their neighbors. The program accomplishes this while also contributing to helping make communities more sustainable.



## Commercial urban farms strengthen your city

### Economically:

- Prosperous local urban farm businesses
- Farm food sales create local economic multiplier effects
- Green urban farm jobs

### Socially:

- Locally owned and operated urban small businesses
- Transforms, revitalizes and beautifies neighborhoods
- Affordable, healthy, high-quality fresh foods

### Environmentally:

- Saves energy and water and reduces city carbon footprint
- Reduces landfill by recycling food and green waste as compost
- Reduces pollution and soil loss by using organic farm practices

## Emerging urban challenges

Thousands of U.S. urban cities and counties are struggling to balance budgets, wrestling with debt, and making difficult cuts in programs and services. Businesses and governments are suffering from inadequate access to capital for financing new ventures and development. Access to capital may continue to decline if the effects of climate change, fuel prices and economic instability continue to deepen.

A properly designed and implemented commercial urban farm does not need much startup capital and is also capable of adapting successfully to future changes in rainfall, temperature, fuel prices and economic conditions.

## Urban farm financial benefits for property owners

There are numerous reasons why property owners should encourage commercial urban farmers to locate on their premises. Below are some of the reasons.

### Urban farm financial benefits for property owners, managers, developers and tenants

Reduced operations & maintenance costs	Eliminated weed abatement costs
Lower waste disposal costs	Stormwater runoff mitigation savings
Phytoremediation of soil contamination	Beautification of grounds and buildings
Reductions in building HVAC loads and costs	Higher building and space lease rates
Improved property values	Higher property Return On Investment (ROI)
The SCUFI program helps urban farmers understand how to generate and share in these financial benefits, thereby substantially improving a commercial urban farm's revenue and profitability.	



# SPIN-Farming®

## What is SPIN-Farming?

SPIN stands for **S**mall **P**lot **I**ntensive. It is a production system that makes it possible to earn significant income growing common vegetables on farms with total land bases under an acre in size. SPIN provides everything you'd expect from a good business system: a business concept, marketing advice, financial benchmarks and a detailed day-to-day workflow. SPIN provides standardized urban farm field practices and business processes that are reliably profitable and consistently effective. SPIN is non-technical, easy to understand and inexpensive to implement. It enables people to farm commercially in their own urban communities, where there is market demand for healthy affordable chemical-free vegetables and fruits.

*"The best thing I have to say about SPIN was that it gave me a whole new way of thinking about farming. That is, farming with an eye to real income without needing the investment of large numbers of acres and huge debt. As a long time grower for my family and friends, I never thought I was "big" enough to be a farmer. SPIN was my "aha!" moment."*

Barb McKillip, Mountain View Meadow Farm, Elbert, Colorado

## Who is SPIN-Farming?

SPIN is practiced by a growing network of full-time and part-time farmers across U.S. and Canada. SPIN can be used to create a high-income farm or improve your current operation. SPIN is the first organic farm production system for farms with total acreage under an acre in size. It can be implemented by aspiring and practicing backyard, front lawn and neighborhood lot farmers everywhere. All you need to do is to equip yourself with the right gear and a radically new understanding of what it means to be a farmer.

There is no standard profile for a SPIN farmer. Some had been educated in other professions, or had other careers. Some had home or community gardening experience, while others had never before had dirt under their fingernails. Some come from traditional farm families, but most do not. Some are young and just starting out, while others are older and on their third or fourth careers. What unites them all is a desire to practice commercial farming in a new way. Whether you are new to farming or want to farm in a new way, SPIN-Farming can help you make good money as an urban farmer.

For more info about SPIN: <http://www.spinfarming.com>

The beginning. Fall 2009



One year later. Summer 2010.



# SCUFI

## Sustainable Commercial Urban Farm Incubator (SCUFI)

The SCUFI program trains people to be sustainable commercial urban farmers and helps them with startup financing and land to establish their own independent urban farm businesses in their own neighborhoods.

The program combines vocational training with a business incubator, which means that successful graduates of the SCUFI program build their own profitable sustainable commercial urban farm businesses prior to graduation.

An aspiring commercial urban farmer moves through the SCUFI program in steps that lead to owning an urban farm business.



### Steps to becoming a SCUFI program commercial urban farmer

1. Take the 8-week SCUFI Orientation Class. It consists of a Friday evening 2-hour session and a Saturday morning 3-hour session each week. The Friday evening session is classroom lectures and demonstrations. The Saturday session is a mix of field trips and field exercises. If you complete the Orientation Class you can apply for a trainee plot on a SCUFI site.
2. If you are accepted as a SCUFI site trainee you immediately start operating your trainee plot as your own commercial urban mini-farm. You receive extensive training during your SCUFI site tenure. Depending on your background and the time you devote to your SCUFI training and mini-farm plot, it should take between one and two years before you graduate.  
  
You work your trainee plot as an independent mini-farm business, incurring costs and generating sales revenue like any business. You are responsible for monthly plot fees that cover your use of SCUFI land, water, insurance, materials, tools and equipment. Special arrangements may be made to defray plot fees through work-trade. You pay a small percentage of your produce sales revenue to help cover SCUFI general overhead, such as marketing, sales and administrative support for your trainee plot mini-farm. You help with SCUFI site administrative, management, operations, maintenance and training tasks, thereby learning to do the same tasks for your own urban farm business.  
  
The SCUFI program helps you secure farm startup financing and secure land plots in your community to enable you to assemble the necessary materials and equipment and build your urban farm land base so you can launch your own neighborhood independent farm business before you graduate from the SCUFI program.
4. Upon graduation from the SCUFI program you are already operating your own commercial urban farm in your community.
5. As a SCUFI program graduate you may be asked to maintain a plot at the SCUFI site and be an onsite Farmer Mentor for subsequent SCUFI plot trainees. As a Farmer Mentor you are paid to help with SCUFI site management and operations as well as the training of SCUFI trainees.

For more info about being a SCUFI trainee, or to contact us about establishing a SCUFI program in your city, email us at: [urbanfarms@virtuallygreen.com](mailto:urbanfarms@virtuallygreen.com)



# SCUFI

## Fast training

A SCUFI program can quickly train city residents to be commercial urban farmers. Below are reasons SCUFI-trained farmers are so fast at setting up their commercial urban farms.

SCUFI commercial urban farms are fast to:
Capitalize – require minimal capital investment or financing
Start up – can be in full operation within weeks of start
Train operators – easy and quick for people to learn how to farm profitably
Generate yields – harvesting of crops can begin within weeks
Produce profits – farm can begin generating income within weeks
Amortize investment – minimal capital at start means quick paying off of loans
Adapt to locales – can farm hot, cool, wet or dry climates, in soil or on impervious surfaces
Replicate widely – can spread quickly throughout a city and region

## Buildings and commercial urban farms

Urban farms benefit from integration of farm operations into structures and systems of buildings and neighborhoods. This is true of existing buildings as well as building renovation and new construction.

The SCUFI program trains urban farmers to see ways they can profitably integrate their farm operations into the structures and systems of buildings adjacent to their urban farm plots.



Benefits for farm of integration with buildings
Using waste heat from adjacent buildings for cold season heating of hoop houses or greenhouses
Capture of building and grounds stormwater runoff for farm irrigation
Using building walls as farm windbreaks and for trellising of crops.
Using building surfaces to reflect sunlight onto crops for season extension and better plant growth
Growing of crops on rooftops of buildings (Brooklyn Grange photo example above)
Diversion of building green and food waste into urban farm composting for soil fertility and sale

For more info about being a SCUFI trainee, or to contact us about establishing a SCUFI program in your city, email us at: [urbanfarms@virtuallygreen.com](mailto:urbanfarms@virtuallygreen.com)

