



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

NATIONAL COMMUNITY GARDENING WEEK
August 23-29, 2009

By the Secretary of Agriculture of the United States of America

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS community gardening provides an estimated 1 million American households the opportunity to connect with the land—a major source of their food—while enjoying the outdoors and earning an average annual return of approximately \$500; and

WHEREAS gardens may be created in both rural and urban spaces, including vacant lots, schoolyards, rooftops, and the grounds of churches or hospitals; and

WHEREAS the local production of food for local consumption offers consumers access to fresh, nutritious food and permits the conservation of natural resources that might otherwise be expended for food processing and transportation; and

WHEREAS community gardens benefit communities in multiple ways, including the provision of opportunities for family and community interaction, recreation, exercise, neighborhood beautification, and education as well as ways to eat healthfully and reduce food costs; and

WHEREAS on February 12, 2009, in commemoration of the 200th birthday of Abraham Lincoln, the U.S. Department of Agriculture dedicated The People's Garden at Departmental Headquarters on the National Mall and is working to expand its People's Garden Initiative into communities as a way of promoting healthful, nutritious food; sustainable land use; and natural resource conservation; and

WHEREAS the U.S. Department of Agriculture supports community garden projects in a variety of ways, including grants, site technical assistance, and informational materials on gardening and food production methods;

NOW, THEREFORE, to further awareness of community gardens' importance and many benefits, I, Thomas J. Vilsack, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, do hereby proclaim August 23–29, 2009, as National Community Gardening Week. I call upon the people of the United States to recognize and celebrate community gardens with appropriate observances and activities and to seek opportunities in their homes, schools, and communities to promote and participate in community gardening activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 4th day of August 2009, the two-hundred thirty-fourth year of the Independence of the United States of America.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Thomas J. Vilsack".

THOMAS J. VILSACK
Secretary