



**ROOFTOP GARDENS:
CREATE YOUR OWN
OASIS IN THE CITY**



**PAST EVENTS
OUR SEASONAL PLATE
FARM TO TABLE**



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EAT LOCAL:
VEGETARIAN DINNER**



**SIDE BAR
PROFILE OF A
WEEKEND FARMER**

SLOW FOOD HONG KONG

Rooftop Gardens: Create Your Own Oasis in the City this Summer.



Photo by: John Fung

Summertime conjures up thoughts of the sun, the beach and other fun outdoor activities. With the soaring summer temperatures, escaping the concrete jungle for a more verdant backdrop, such as in Sai Kung or Lamma, can be a popular excursion on weekends. However more and more Hong Kongers are discovering a different way to escape and unwind, one that doesn't require leaving the city to enjoy some sun and be surrounded by greenery.

One need only to look upwards to discover these compact urban oases that have begun to spring up across the Hong Kong skyline. Rooftop gardens are far from mainstream in Hong Kong, but have increased in popularity as residents began to turn previously unused common outdoor spaces into a refuge from the crowded streets.

Some city dwellers turn to gardening as an outlet for the daily stress of long hours spent sitting in an office. But another growing motivator is the desire to know the source of our food and produce. The produce we purchase from shops may have traveled thousands of kilometres and was possibly sprayed

with pesticides or other harmful chemicals, so to be able to grow and cultivate the food we put on our plates can be an appealing alternative.

However, the benefits of rooftop gardening don't stop at the individual level. According to Mathew Pryor, Department Head of Landscape Architecture at Hong Kong University, a rooftop garden can even help bring people together and build communities. Gardening is truly an universal activity which can be enjoyed by all, from the elderly to children.



Photo by: John Fung

Rooftop gardening is more accessible in Hong Kong than one might have imagined. In his book, *The Edible Roof*, published by MCCM Creations, Mathew Pryor gives a step-by-step how-to guide on starting a rooftop garden in the city.

Additionally our friends at Rooftop Republic host workshops at their many rooftop gardens across the city. Perfect for those interested in nurturing a green thumb but whom aren't quite ready to invest the time and space. <http://www.rooftoprepublic.com>

And finally, for those set on getting out of the city to decongest, check out our profile on Elaine Ng, a Slow Food volunteer and avid weekend farmer. Elaine ventures out to the New Territories to tend to her rented farm plot each weekend; she gives us some tips for those wanting to get their hands dirty.

For more information on *The Edible Roof*, visit www.mccmcreations.com.

Profile of A Weekend Farmer

Elaine Ng



On weekdays, Elaine is your average Hong Konger, balancing a busy career with a daily life firmly rooted in the city. Come Sunday, however, rain or shine, Elaine journeys out to the New Territories where she has rented a small plot of land since Autumn 2014 and transforms herself from city dweller to country farmer for an afternoon each week.

Elaine has learnt from scratch the art of horticulture and cultivated to date an impressive repertoire of crops for someone who still considers herself a novice – corn, lettuce, cabbage, beetroot, cucumber, hairy gourd, radish, tomato, carrot, among others.

Here Elaine shares her experience with us.

What was your motivation to start weekend farming?

“It may sound incredible but it all traces back to a trip to Africa in summer 2014, when I was deeply touched while on safari by a feeling of liberation from stressful city life. On return, I was keen to take up something that would reconnect me to nature. I stumbled on the idea of weekend farming on discovering that there are a number of farms in town that rent out plots to amateurs. There is actually a sizeable community of weekend farmers in Hong Kong!”

Previous Events

May 28 | Our Seasonal Plate: A Farm to Table Lunch

On May 28, Rooftop Republic, in collaboration with Slow Food HK and The Fringe Club hosted an interactive session on their rooftop farm. Michelle Lau of Nutrilicious and our very own Sandra Hong shared their insights on the slow food philosophy and nutrition through a cooking demo. Chef Joe of Colette's followed up by serving a delicious vegetarian lunch.

Upcoming Events

July 25 | Eat Local: A Vegetarian Dinner in Collaboration with Kong Yeah

Join Slow Food Hong Kong and 港嘢 Kong Yeah for a vegetarian dinner featuring local and seasonal Hong Kong farm produce. The exclusive dinner will include a presentation by 港嘢 Kong Yeah where they will share with us their fascinating story and mission. <http://slowfood.com.hk/event/local-veg-dinner/>

Sept 22-26 | Terra Madre Salone del Gusto



Terra Madre Salone del Gusto will be held in Turin this year to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the first Salone del Gusto and Slow Food Italy's 30th

birthday. An international event dedicated to food and gastronomy, information on **11 conferences** and **40 forums** is now online, explore over 50 different occasions to embrace this year's theme of "loving the earth."

Keep up with our upcoming events at <http://slowfood.com.hk/upcoming-events/>.

What has kept you going every weekend for nearly two years?

"I can't believe that I have kept up my new hobby for this long – in fact, I am pretty passionate about farming at the moment! I think this is because of the multiple benefits that I have experienced.

I get to eat fresh, organic vegetables that are safe and clean (no pesticides or chemical fertilizers are used on the farm). I've also learnt a lot about the forms crops take in nature as opposed to how they look like in supermarkets; I used to be quite ignorant about which parts could be eaten. I also get to try new vegetables that I hadn't previously eaten and explore various ways to cook them.

Working with my hands has also proven to be very therapeutic, as well as the added benefit of being outdoors, exposed to fresh air and the sun. And there is a real joy in harvesting and sharing my crops with family and friends."



Any tips for those looking to get their hands dirty?

"Just dive into it! The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department publishes "A Guide to Hong Kong Leisure Farms", (Chinese language only) which provides useful information on farming experience activities and plot renting at leisure farms in town. Or start by planting an herb plant at home."

Doing something that you feel reflects the pillars of Slow Food Hong Kong's mission to promote: good clean fair food, sustainability and cultural heritage preservation? Email us at info@slowfood.hk for a chance to be featured.