

WYOMING

Wyoming State Forestry Division

The Wyoming State Forestry Division Community Forestry grants program provided nearly \$100,000 for 10 community food forest projects to aid in efforts to reduce urban food deserts, provide locally sourced fresh fruits, as well as create educational opportunities to community members. Partnering with the University of Wyoming Extension offices across the state and Master Gardener programs, these community gardens will be well-tended and boast fruitful harvests in the coming years.

Food deserts are areas where large proportions of households have limited access to a variety of healthy and affordable food, typically seen in areas with low income, inadequate transportation, and limited food retailers with affordable prices (Dutko et al., 2012). Between the years of 2007-2009 to 2017-2019, Wyoming had a statistically significant percentage point increase and increased average prevalence of food insecurity per household (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2019). Food deserts are not uncommon in rural states like Wyoming.

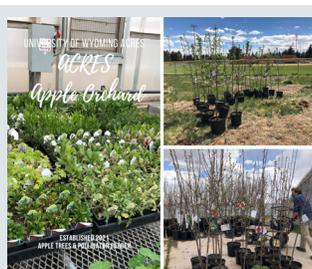
In spring 2021, to make locally sourced fresh produce more accessible, Wyoming State Forestry Division (WSFD) provided funding to create, enhance, and implement Community Food Forests/Urban Orchards. These projects primarily included planting fruiting trees and shrubs and incorporating pollinator friendly plants to promote pollinator habitat. These development grant projects were required to have an educational component.

WSFD partnered with the University of Wyoming Extension to work with the Master Gardener (MG) programs across the state. By working with MG volunteers, these projects have and will gain exposure to a like-minded community network of volunteers, provide public beautification, and offer numerous training demonstrations for the public, local interest groups, and MGs. These trainings could include class topics such as proper planting, identification, pruning, harvesting, clean up, and propagation. Harvested produce will be made available to those in need - by being donated to those who come to harvest on their own or by donations made to local food banks.



Community Food Forests and Urban Orchards located in communities across Wyoming. Map by Tara Costanzo, Wyoming State Forestry Division

In an effort to reduce the reliance on imported fresh fruits, ten urban orchards were installed in Buffalo, Casper, Cheyenne, Gillette, Laramie, Lingle, Rawlins, Sheridan, and Worland. The variety of fruiting tree species included: peach, apricot, cherry, pear, plum, and apple. In total, the local community efforts and volunteer hours plus the WSFD Community Forestry program pass through grant funds provided over \$96,000 with match.



The University of Wyoming in Laramie planted numerous fruiting trees and plants at one of the research gardens on campus. Photo: Chris Hilgert, University of Wyoming Extension



Buffalo, WY community orchard planting project was installed with the help of the Boys and Girls Club of Buffalo, the First Lady and Governor of Wyoming, and community volunteers on June 1, 2021. Photo: Jessi Dodge, Buffalo Bulletin



Laramie County Master Gardeners along with Laramie County Conservation District planted an urban orchard at the Laramie County Community College in Cheyenne, WY on May 22, 2021. Photo: Tara Costanzo



The Campbell County Master Gardener program improved their gazebo area and planted many new fruiting trees near Complex Park in Gillette, WY. Photo: Mandy Reynolds, University of Wyoming Campbell County Extension

Citations: Coleman-Jensen, Alisha, Matthew P. Rabbitt, Christian A. Gregory, and Anita Singh. 2020. Household Food Security in the United States in 2019, ERR-275, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/99282/err-275.pdf?v=4337.3>. Dutko, Paula, Michele Ver Ploeg, and Tracey Farrigan. Characteristics and Influential Factors of Food Deserts, ERR-140, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, August 2012. https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/45014/30940_err140.pdf.

Wyoming State Forestry Division | Community Forestry
<https://wsfd.wyo.gov/forestry-assistance-programs/community-forestry>

Wyoming State Forestry Division is a division of the Wyoming Office of State Lands and Investments.