



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WHEAT, PEAS, BUCKWHEAT, FAVAS AND MORE - FROM A ROOFTOP VICTORY GARDEN

04 JULY 2007 (Chicago)

The first produce from a food producing roof in Edgewater has been taken down to the street for people to eat. What started as an empty, lifeless, mass of growing media atop a food store, is now blossoming with life and growing food.

The roof is very special in that it is relying on beneficial microbes and combinations of various plant species to colonize sterile growing media. The process is similar to the process by which bare rocks or sand dunes are transformed into living ecosystems.

Not only is this roof attracting attention from people, it is attracting butterflies, birds, honeybees and recently, a blue dragonfly. The roof provides a cool habitat for our little friends, and food in the form of nectar from flowers. Mitigating for habitat loss is one of the many benefits that a vegetated roof can provide.

Cold snaps and lack of rain have made keeping crops alive very challenging. Climate disruption is already unfortunately impacting our Chicago rooftop farmers in catastrophic ways. A highly irregular weather pattern last October killed 270 heads of romaine and butter crunch lettuce, and a cold snap in April killed half of the cabbages.

The roof is atop True Nature Foods and the project is overseen by Urban Habitat Chicago. Funding for the initial construction was provided in part by the city of Chicago under the Green Roof Grant program administered by the Department of Environment.

Food grown in an urban environment is critical to ensure food supply that does not rely on fossil fuel for transportation that is dwindling in availability, and growing in expense.

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