

HOME GARDENING IN OHIO

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY INITIATIVE TOPICAL REPORT 09-01

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HIGHLIGHTS

This report examines the prevalence of home fruit and vegetable gardening among Ohioans utilizing data from the 2008 Ohio Survey of Food, Agriculture, and Environmental Issues.

- Nearly half of Ohio households report maintaining a fruit or vegetable garden.
- Most fruit and vegetable gardens are maintained by farm and countryside households.
- Gardening occurs mostly among those living in houses.
- The average amount of monetary value produced from fruit and vegetable gardens was \$225 per household.
- The most frequently reported barrier to fruit and vegetable gardening reported is too little time followed by too little space or access to garden.
- Nearly half of Ohioans report canning or freezing fresh vegetables or fruit they grow or purchase.
- Almost half of home gardeners compost yard, garden, or kitchen waste.

STUDY BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Ohio Survey of Food, Agriculture, and Environmental Issues is a biennial statewide survey of rural and urban Ohioans conducted by the Social Responsibility Initiative of the College of Food, Agriculture and Environmental Sciences. The primary objective of the survey is to measure

Ohioans' attitudes about a variety of contemporary food, farming and environmental topics and to track changes in attitudes over time. The survey was first conducted in 2002.

The project receives support from Ohio State University's Department of Human and Community Resource Development; Ohio State University Extension; the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (OARDC); and OSU's College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences and is a core project of the Social Responsibility Initiative.

The 2008 survey was mailed to 3,500 randomly selected Ohio households between March and June, 2008. Responses were received from over 1,500 Ohioans and the response rate was over 48%, which is favorable for this type of mail survey.

This report examines the prevalence of home gardening among Ohioans. This topic is important as gardening is gaining considerable interest among scholars and policymakers interested in improving nutrition and access to nutritious fresh foods and as a community development strategy.

CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

The characteristics of survey respondents compare favorably to U.S. Census Bureau statistics from the 2007 American Community Survey (ACS). The demographics of survey respondents are similar to the Ohio adult population in terms of educational attainment, employment status, home values and household income.

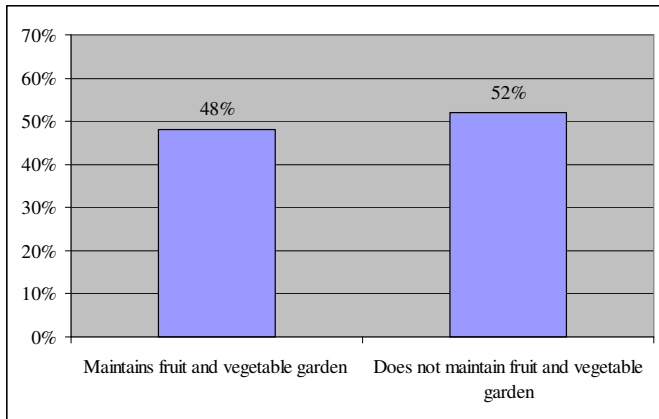
There were some differences between respondents and Ohio's population as determined by the ACS.

A larger proportion of survey respondents were female and resided in married households. There was also a modestly lower proportion of African American respondents compared to the statewide population. The most substantial difference was that a larger proportion of sample respondents reported residing in owner-occupied housing units compared to the state population.

THE PREVALENCE OF GARDENING

To understand the prevalence of home gardening, Ohioans were asked if they or anyone in their household maintains a fruit or vegetable garden. Nearly half of Ohio households report they maintain a fruit or vegetable garden (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1. HOME GARDENING IN OHIO



WHO MAINTAINS FRUIT AND VEGETABLE GARDENS?

To better understand who is gardening, we explore home gardeners by age, income group, and family size.

With regard to age, home vegetable and fruit gardens are maintained by all age groups although a slightly higher percentage of respondents aged 51 to 65 years of age indicate they or someone in their household maintains a fruit or vegetable garden (Figure 2).

A larger percentage of households with children report maintaining a fruit or vegetable garden (54 percent) compared to households without children (46 percent) (Figure 3).

FIGURE 2. GARDENERS BY AGE

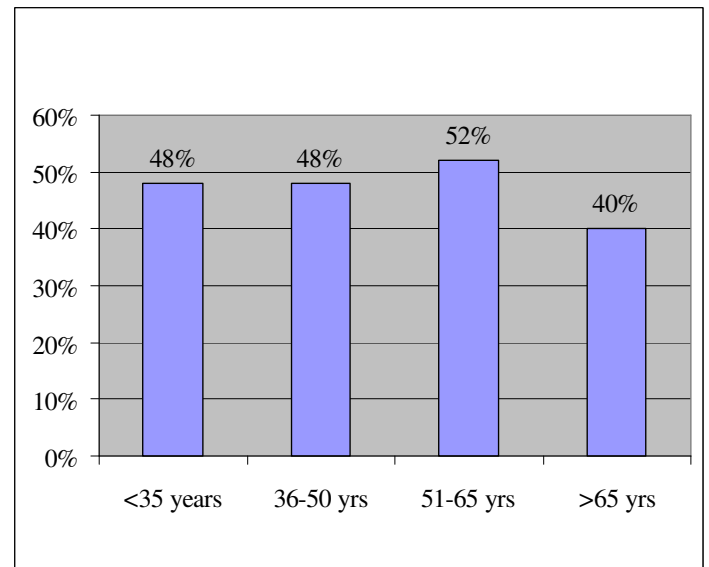
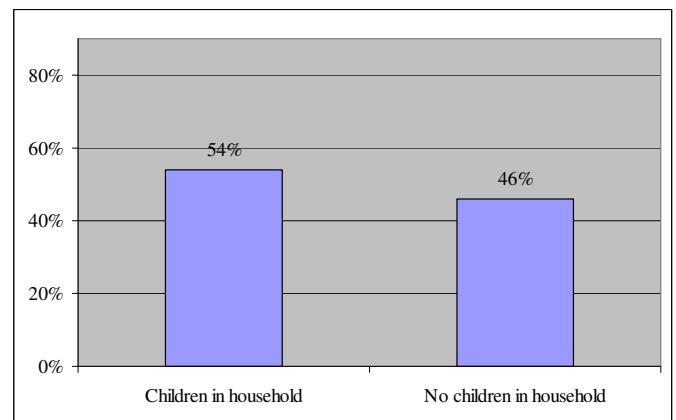


FIGURE 3. HOME GARDENS AND CHILDREN IN THE HOUSEHOLD



Considering home gardening and income we find forty percent of middle-income households report maintaining a fruit or vegetable garden. Fewer lower and upper income households report home gardening (29 percent and 31 percent respectively) (Figure 4).

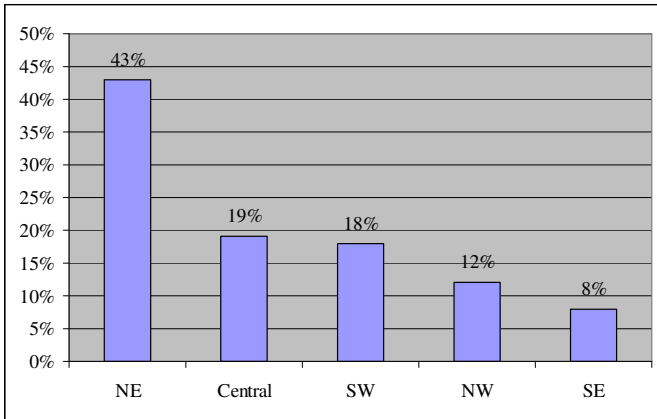
FIGURE 4. HOME GARDENS AND HOUSEHOLD INCOME



WHERE DO HOME GARDENERS LIVE?

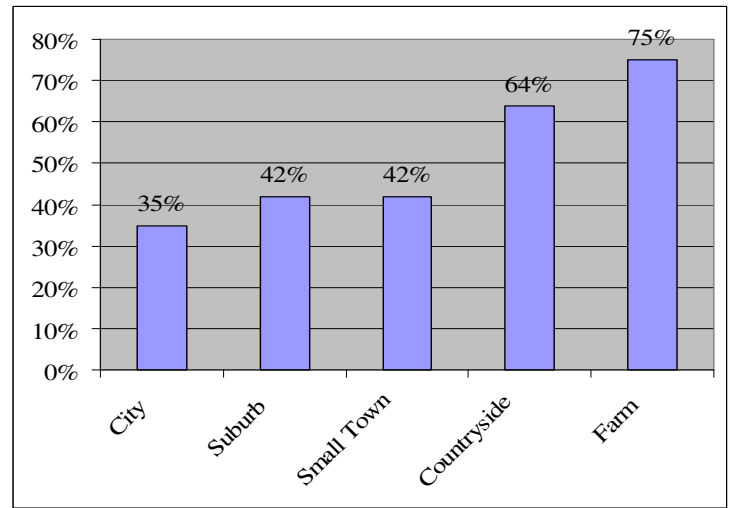
To further understand who gardens, we examined where gardening is occurring regionally within the state, and also by residence. We find that home gardening is occurring most frequently in northeast Ohio (43 percent). Home gardening is less frequent in southeast Ohio (8 percent) (Figure 5).

FIGURE 5. HOME GARDENING BY REGION



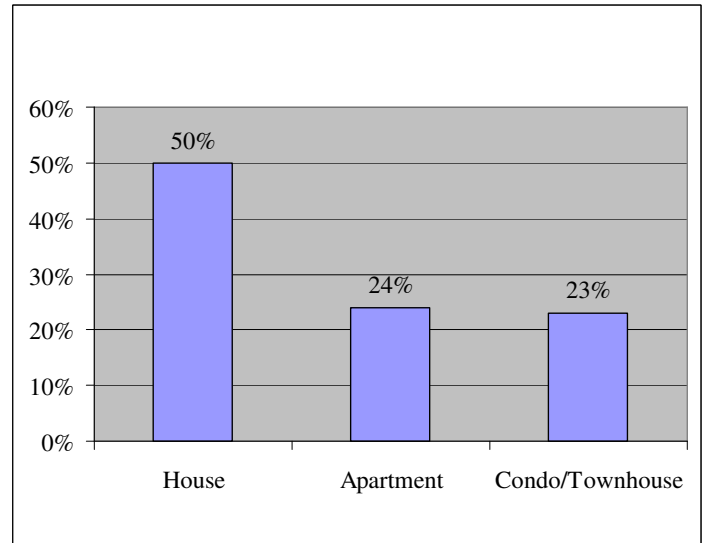
As part of the survey, respondents were asked to describe where they currently live. Figure 6 reports the percentage of households that maintain a fruit or vegetable garden by residential location. A smaller percentage of city, suburban and small town residents report maintaining a home garden compared to farm and countryside, non—farm households.

FIGURE 6. HOME GARDENING BY RESIDENCE



The type of housing a respondent lives in is very important when considering the existence of a garden. Respondents were asked to identify the type of housing they currently live in. Fewer Ohioans living in apartments or condos/townhouses (24 percent and 23 percent respectively) report home gardening compared to those who live in houses (50 percent) (Figure 7)

FIGURE 6. HOME GARDENING BY TYPE OF HOUSING

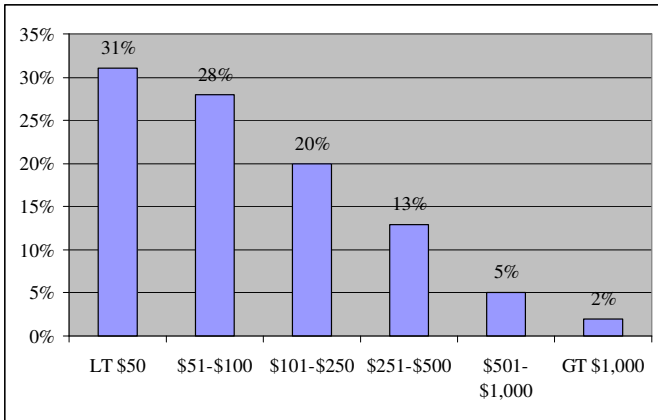


MONETARY VALUE OF GARDEN PRODUCTION

Those who grew fruits and vegetables for home consumption in 2007 were asked to estimate what its value was if they had bought the same food at a grocery store or farmers’ market. Responses range from \$1 to \$3,000. The average estimated value of output from fruit and vegetable gardens among

home gardeners is \$225. Figure 8 reports estimated monetary output in dollars from home fruit and vegetable gardens. Most garden output is valued at \$100 or less (59 percent). A few home gardeners estimate greater monetary value. Seven percent estimate values at \$500 or more.

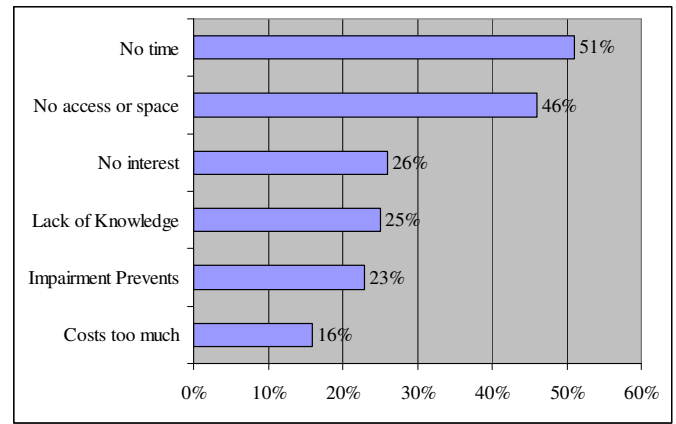
FIGURE 8. ESTIMATED MONETARY VALUE OF OUTPUT FROM GARDEN



BARRIERS TO GARDENING

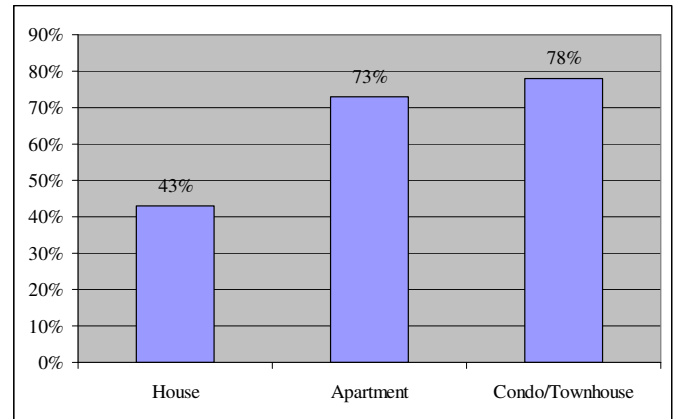
Respondents were asked to identify obstacles they perceived to starting a garden or to increasing the production of fruit and/or vegetables they grow. Lack of time followed by lack of available space were identified most frequently as barriers to starting or increasing the volume of fruits or vegetables produced. Fifty-one percent of Ohioans reported that time is a barrier to gardening and 46 percent said that lack of space and access to a place to garden is a barrier. About one-quarter of Ohioans reported no interest in fruit or vegetable gardening. Twenty-five percent indicated they did not know how to grow fruits or vegetables (Figure 9).

FIGURE 9. BARRIERS TO GARDENING



To further understand barriers to home gardening, we considered the extent to which housing type might be related to lack of space or access to a place to garden. A larger percentage of those living in apartments (73 percent) and in condominiums or townhouses (78 percent) indicate space or access to garden as a barrier to gardening compared to those living in houses (43 percent) (Figure 10).

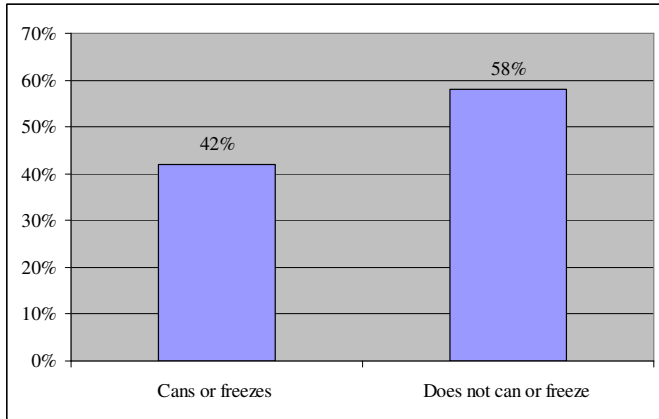
FIGURE 10. NO SPACE OR ACCESS TO GARDEN BY DWELLING



OTHER SELF PROVISIONING BEHAVIORS

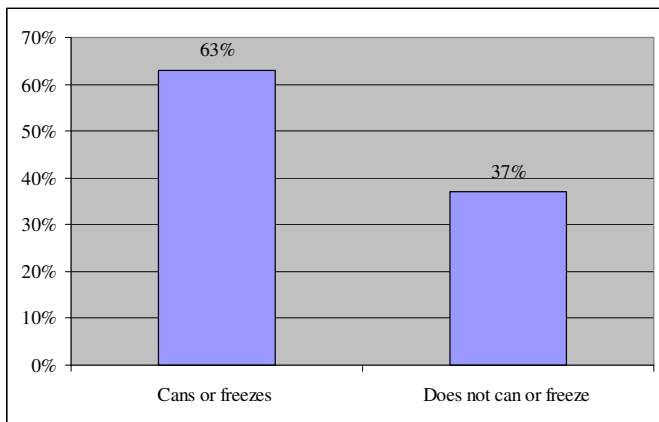
In addition to asking about gardening, the 2008 Ohio Survey asked questions about other self-provisioning behaviors. Respondents were asked if they can or freeze fresh fruits or vegetables they grow themselves or purchase. Over half of Ohio households indicate they do not can or freeze fresh vegetables or fruit grown or purchased. Forty-two percent of households indicate they do can or freeze these foods (Figure 11).

FIGURE 11. CANNING AND FREEZING AMONG OHIO HOUSEHOLDS



Among home gardeners, 63 percent indicate they or someone in their household cans or freezes fresh fruits and vegetables grown or purchased (Figure 12). We also find among home gardeners, 43 percent indicate they compost yard, garden, or kitchen waste.

FIGURE 12. THE PREVALENCE OF CANNING AND FREEZING AMONG GARDENERS

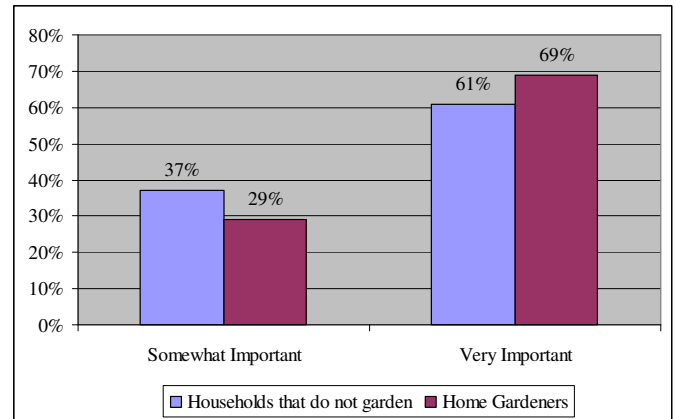


HOME GARDENING AND SUPPORT FOR LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS

To evaluate support of Ohioans for further developing local and regional food systems in the state, respondents were asked to identify how important it is that state and local governments work to develop stronger local food systems throughout the state. Home gardeners indicate this as a slightly more important goal than Ohio households that do not maintain a fruit or vegetable garden (Figure 13). Sixty-nine percent of

home gardeners indicate it is very important for state and local governments to work to develop stronger local food systems and about a third indicate it is somewhat important (30 percent).

FIGURE 13. LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE FOR STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO WORK TO DEVELOP LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS THROUGHOUT OHIO



ABOUT US

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