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Assessing and Addressing Exposures to Soil Contaminants Related to Urban Gardening Activities: A Community-Research Partnership

Project Summary

Urban community gardens provide affordable, locally grown, healthy foods and many other benefits. However, the extent and effects of soil contamination in many areas remain uncertain, and existing data and resources do not sufficiently address community needs and concerns. Through a community-research partnership that includes Cornell University researchers and Extension educators, the New York State Department of Health, gardening organization GreenThumb and other partners, this project aims to address the need for information and resources through collaborative research to directly inform the development of education and public health action strategies. Key project activities include: (1) Assessing soil and vegetable contaminant levels (and other soil properties) and human exposures through gardening activities in urban community gardens; (2) Evaluating the effectiveness of management strategies in mitigating associated health risks; (3) Translating research findings into effective education and public health action strategies; (4) Identifying future research needs to sufficiently characterize potential exposures and risks for urban gardeners; and (5) Evaluating the success of education and outreach programs in effectively addressing community concerns and reducing exposures to soil contaminants related to urban gardening activities.

Funding Agency

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Primary Project Team

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New York State Department of Health
- Edie Stone and colleagues
GreenThumb, New York City Department of Parks and Recreation
- Other collaborators and community participants from government agencies, not-for-profits, colleges and universities, gardens and gardening groups, and other interested organizations