

# Four reasons why filling our urban spaces with food growing places is a good idea

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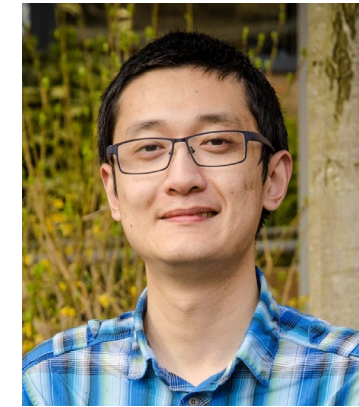
15/06/2021

Jess Davies, Professor of Sustainability  
Centre for Global Eco-innovation

[www.lancaster.ac.uk/lec/rurbanrevolution](http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/lec/rurbanrevolution) @RurbanRev



# Rurban Revolution Team



# Four reasons why filling our urban spaces with food growing places is a good idea

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# 1. We need to find ways to do agriculture differently

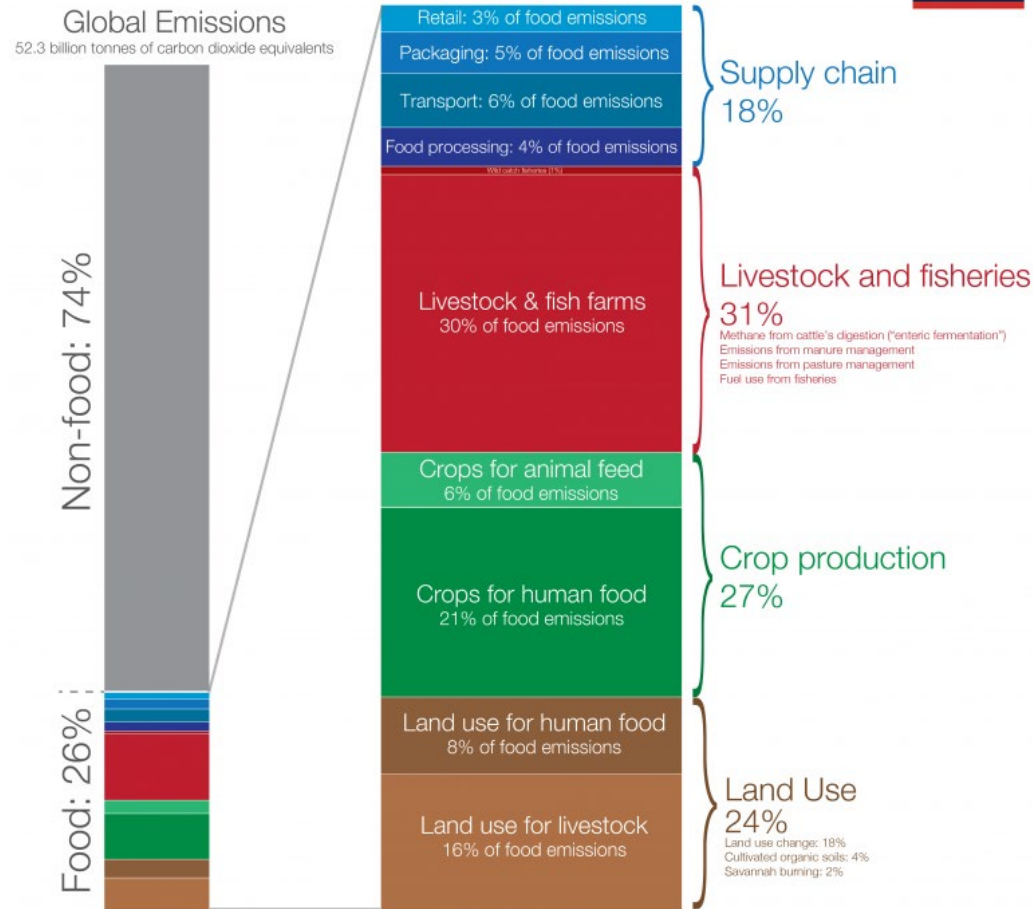
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# 1. We need to find ways to do agriculture differently

Global greenhouse gas emissions from food production 



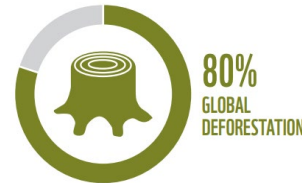
- Food is a major contributor to climate change
- How we grow food makes up the majority of emissions
- And a big chunk of this is land related

# 1. We need to find ways to do agriculture differently

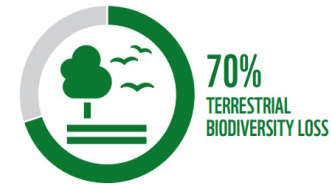
Agricultural land use is a major driver of environmental degradation, and land/soil degradation is a threat to the future sustainability of agriculture



Agriculture is responsible for 80% of global deforestation



Drivers linked to food production cause 70% of terrestrial biodiversity loss



52% of agricultural production land is degraded





# 1. We need to find ways to do agriculture differently

## How many harvests left in our soils?

- 16% of soils in our recent global study had <100 years left
- Soils with lifespans shorter than humans found all over the world
- Soils are an almost non-renewable resource – it can take 100s-1000s of years to form an inch of topsoil

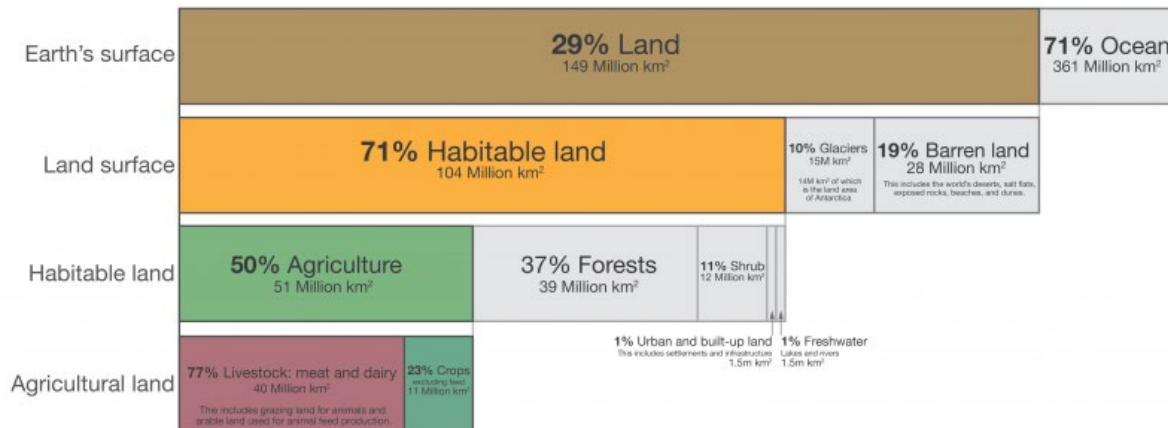


Photo by John Quinton, Lancaster Uni

# 1. We need to find ways to do agriculture differently

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Current dominant modes of food production are unsustainable

What might urban spaces have to offer?

- Food with less land take and deforestation?
- Food with less biodiversity loss?
- Food with less soil degradation?
- Food with more opportunities for water and nutrient use efficiency?



*Our research: How much food (fruit & vegetables) could we grow in towns and cities?*



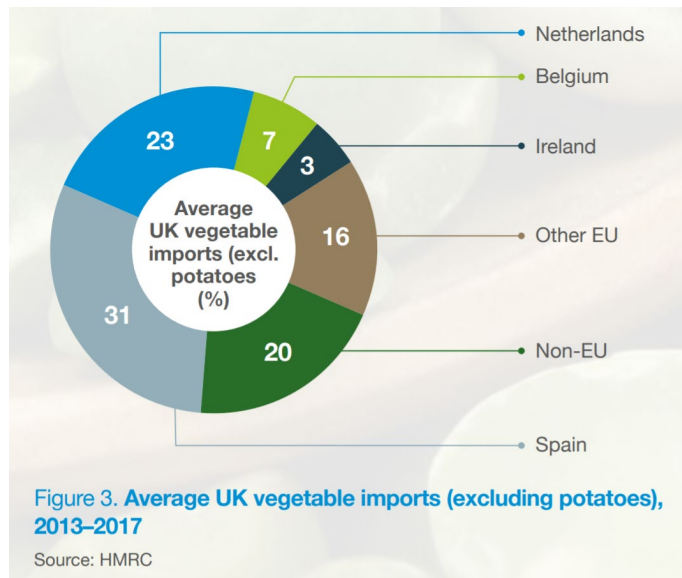
## 2. Boosting availability of fresh fruit and vegetables is a good idea

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## 2. Boosting availability of fresh fruit and vegetables is a good idea

- Vulnerable supplies: 84% of UK's fresh fruit and 50% of veg imported



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## Fresh food is being left to rot undelivered as supermarket shelves and restaurant plates sit empty due to nationwide HGV driver shortage, fruit and veg boss says

- Supermarkets are finding it increasingly difficult to replenish their shelves
- A shortage of truck drivers in the UK is causing problems across retail firms
- Tim O'Malley of Nationwide Produce said fresh food is rotting in cold storage
- He said tax changes, Brexit and Covid are all contributing to the current crisis

By DARREN BOYLE FOR MAILONLINE  
PUBLISHED: 09:30, 9 June 2021 | UPDATED: 12:55, 9 June 2021

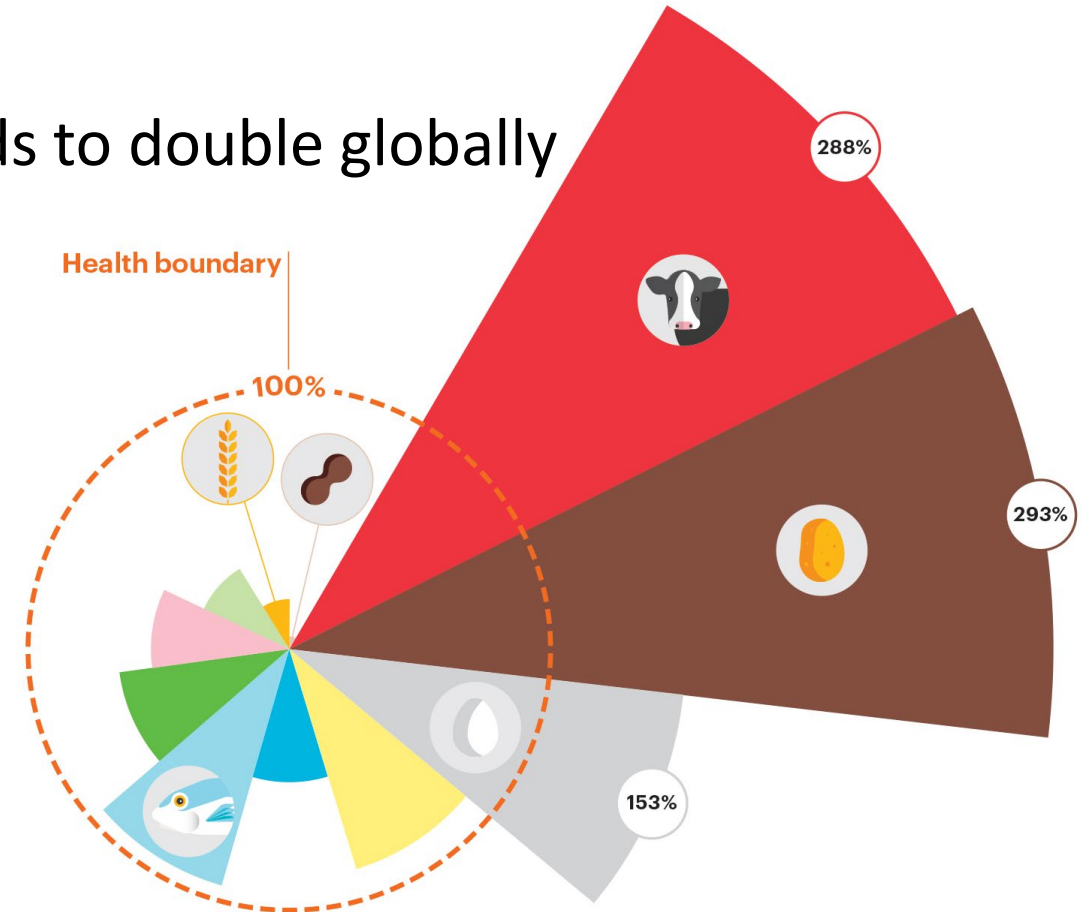
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## 2. Boosting availability of fresh fruit and vegetables is a good idea

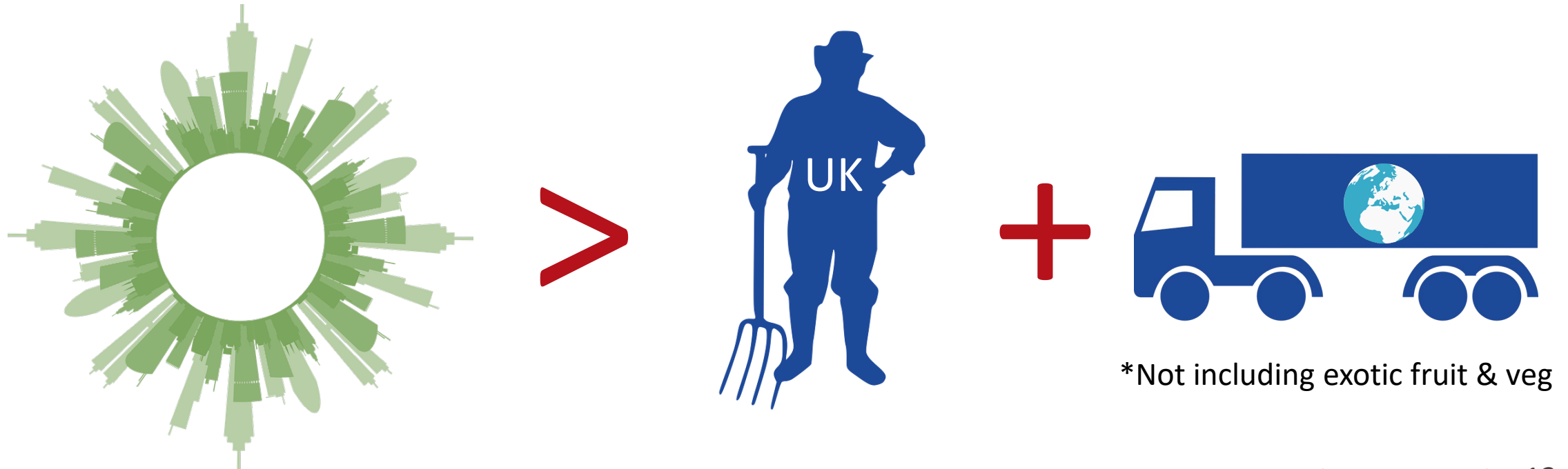
- Fresh fruit & vegetable consumption needs to double globally
- ~30% of adults in the UK eat 5 a day





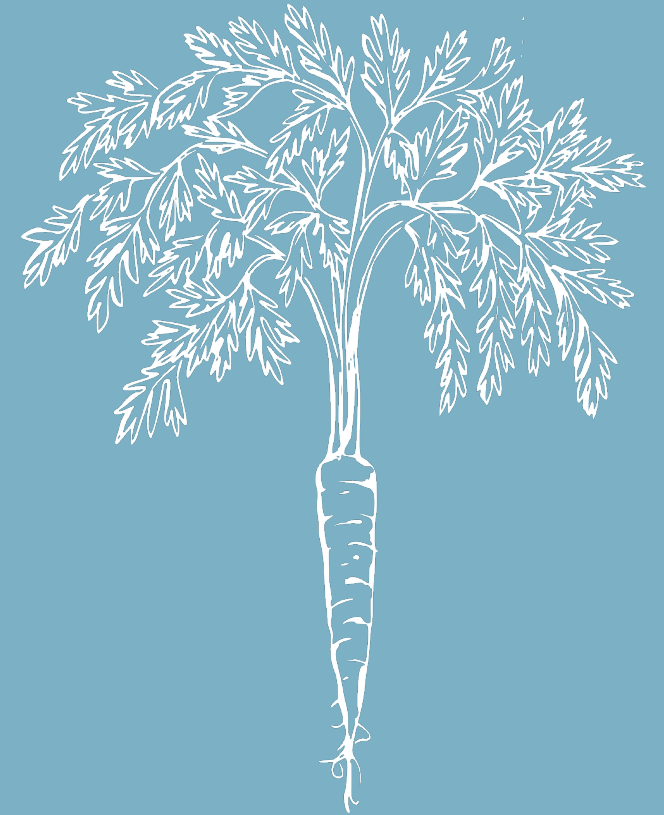
## 2. Boosting availability of fresh fruit and vegetables is a good idea

*How much food (fruit & vegetables) could we grow in towns and cities?*



### 3. Urban food growing can be good for our health

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### 3. It can be good for our health

*Does urban food growing lead to better dietary health?*

- Quite possibly! Urban food growing associated with better dietary quality
- Caring more about what we eat: Urban food growing was linked to wanting to eat healthier and more sustainably
- Not only growers – but those near to growing

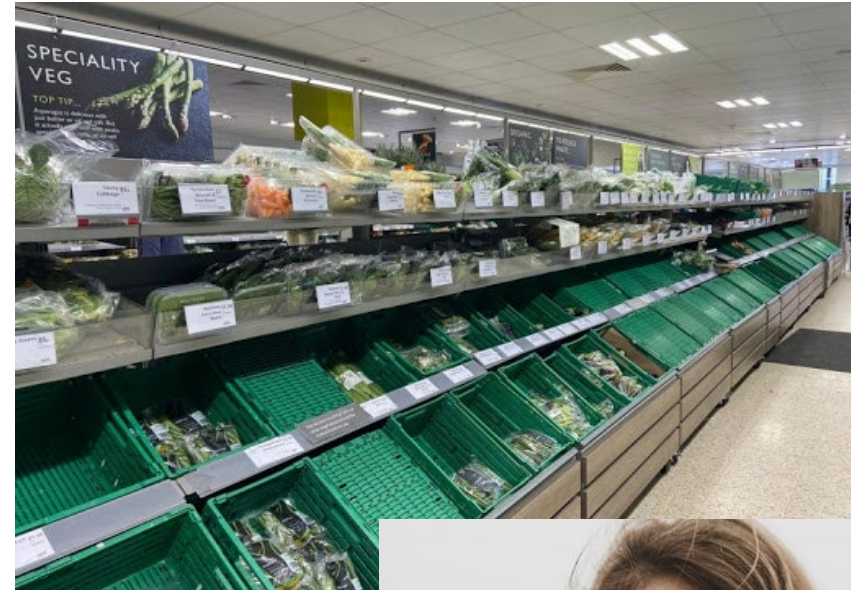




### 3. It can be good for our health

*What effect did urban growing have on individuals during lockdown?*

- During lockdown 1 those engaged in, or exposed to urban food growing:
  - Felt less stressed
  - Lower levels of food insecurity
- Urban food growing can support our well-being during extraordinary times

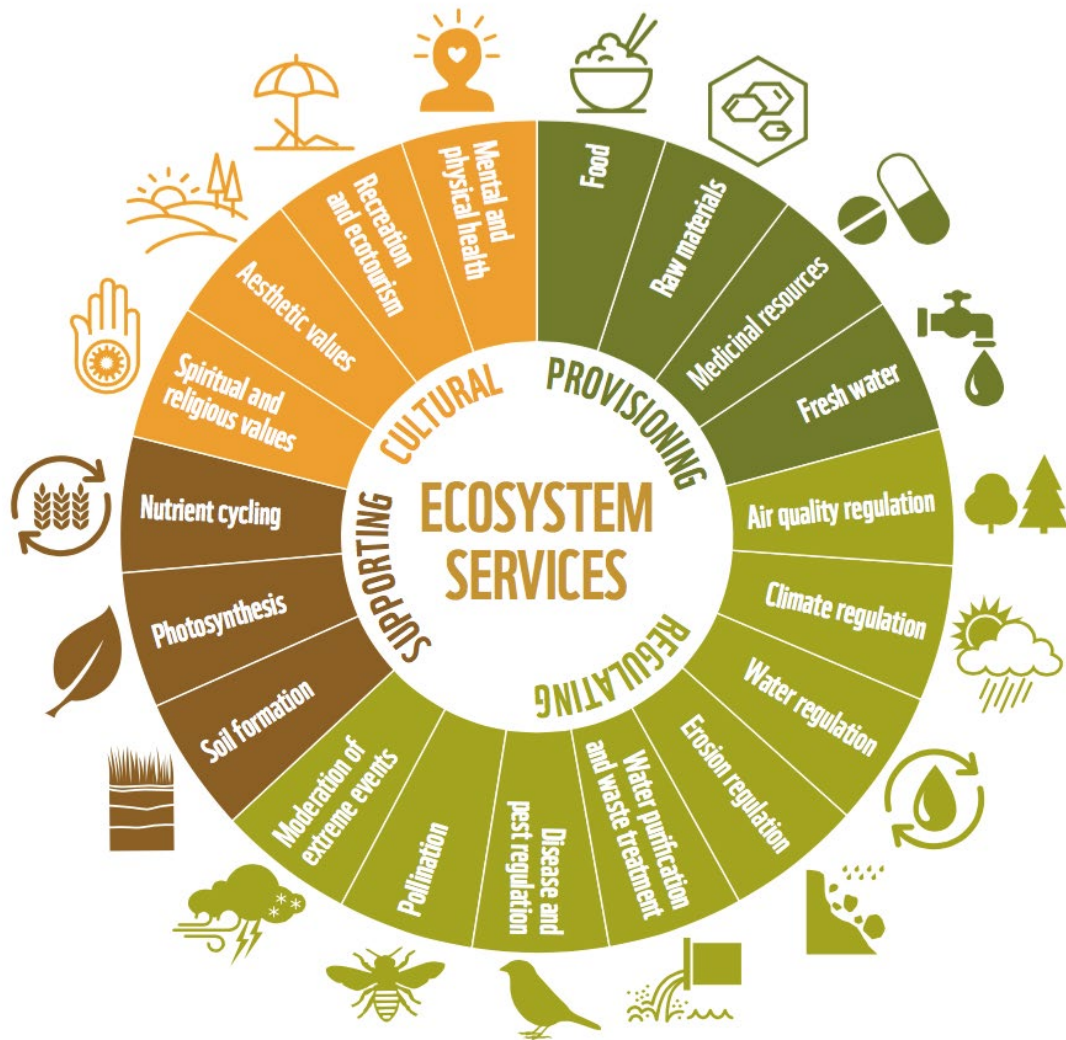


## 4. Urban food growing can be good for ecosystems (and in turn for us)

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## 4. It can be good for urban ecosystems

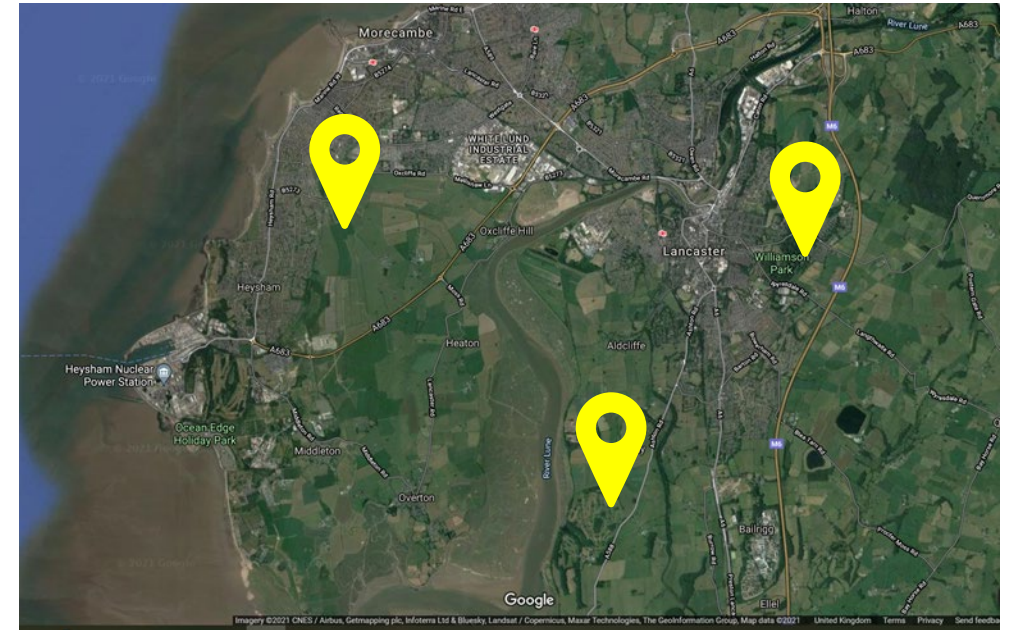


- Nature provides us with all sorts of services
- Introducing green spaces in urban areas brings these benefits nearer to where most of us live
- Our research suggests that growing spaces provide as wide a range of ecosystem services as non-edible greenspaces
- There may be boosts to benefits where edible and non-edible planting is combined



# Rurban Hope Spots Lancaster

- Finding the hope spots – the places that are good for food growing, good for people, good for ecosystems
- Building on Friends of the Earth and Lancaster City Council work and piloting in Lancaster District
- We'll be sharing the results in the Autumn



# Four reasons why filling our urban spaces with food growing places is a good idea...

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1. We need to find ways to do agriculture differently
2. Boosting availability of fresh fruit and vegetables is a good idea
3. Urban food growing can be good for our health
4. Urban food growing can be good for ecosystems (and in turn for us)

...and many more

# Join the Rurban Revolution!

- Get in touch with us
- Get involved and support North Lancashire Food Futures and The Plot:
  - <https://foodfutures.org.uk/>





RURBAN  
REVOLUTION



Thank you

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