

Urban farming as alternative food source encouraged in QC homes

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QUEZON City Councilor Mikey Belmonte called on households to adopt urban farming to provide an alternative and healthy food source, citing families are staying home amid stricter quarantine regulations following a recent surge in Covid-19 cases.

"With the recent rise in cases especially in Quezon City, we know families are having a harder time providing for their daily needs due to the limitation of movement and due to the reduction in income of many breadwinners. One opportunity they could explore is backyard farming. With minimal inputs, a family can already start growing a few vegetables and fruits to supplement their food intake," said the District 2 councilor.

Through the MB Farmville program, initiated by Belmonte in partnership with the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) under the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Office of the City Mayor, communities and households belonging to District 2 are provided with free technical training on urban gardening.

Topics covered in the training include potting, soil mix preparation, bio-pesticide making, seed germination, upcycling of household items to be reused for gardening, planting techniques, and important post-harvest processes.

MB Farmville also provides free starter kits to help jumpstart backyard gardens for interested residents.

"You gain many benefits by starting even a small backyard farm. Apart from the additional savings on food costs that could be generated, you're also giving your family nutritious options to add to every meal. This is important nowadays because we need to boost our health and resistance to viruses," said Belmonte, adding: "With urban farming, you also contribute to making a greener city which benefits all of us."

Recently, Quezon City held its first harvest festival in the seven-hectare Greenland farm where around 700 kilos of produce were harvested. There are over 100 farmers growing crops in the area situated in Barangay Bagong Silangan.

To further boost urban farming capacity, a sophisticated and advanced Greenhouse Village is to be constructed and opened within the year in Barangay Payatas to better assist beginner urban farmers.