Can I Grow Here?

A zoning worksheet for community gardens, urban farms and farm stands. Fill it in as you call the planning office. Updated November 13, 2026.

Why a worksheet. Zoning is local, so the answer depends on your city or county, your zoning district and what you plan to do. A home vegetable garden is usually an ordinary residential use, while questions start when a garden serves a group, sells food, keeps animals or bees, or adds buildings. This sheet walks you through finding your district, reading the use table and asking the planning office for the answer in writing. It follows our guide at urbanaglaw.org/planning-and-zoning/how-to-find-your-zoning/.

1. Your site

Address	
Parcel number (APN, tax parcel or PIN; on your property tax bill or the county assessor's website)	
Inside a city? If outside city limits, zoning may be set by the county	
Zoning district code (for example R-1 or RM-2)	
Overlays (historic, flood, transit, design)	
Planning office contact and phone	

2. Find the rules

- ☐ **Search for the map.** Search for "[city or county] zoning map" or "[city] property search." Raleigh, for example, offers a Citywide Zoning Map in iMaps, and Miami-Dade offers a Property Search.
- ☐ **Enter the address and read the district.** The map shows a district code and may list overlays or special districts.
- ☐ **Open the zoning code for that district.** Find the use table and the district standards.
- ☐ **Check the overlays.** Historic, flood, transit or design overlays can add rules.
- ☐ **Confirm with the planning office.** Ask in writing, or ask for a zoning verification letter if you need proof for a lease, loan or purchase.

3. Use table check

In the zoning code's use table for your district, mark how each activity is treated, and write the limits (size, hours, setbacks, signs) and the code section.

Activity	By right	Permit or conditional	Not allowed	Limits and code section
Home garden (household only)				
Community garden				
Urban farm				
Selling produce on site				
Farm stand				
Backyard chickens				
Bees				
Shed, greenhouse or hoop house				
Rooftop growing				

How to read the result. By right means allowed without special approval if you meet the standards. Conditional or special use means a review and permit, often with conditions. If your use is not allowed, or allowed only conditionally, ask about a conditional use permit, a variance or a different site, and check your lease and HOA.

4. Questions to ask the planning office

- ☐ What is the zoning district and overlay for this parcel?
- ☐ Is a community garden, urban farm or farm stand allowed here, by right or with a permit?
- ☐ Are there size limits, hours or sales rules?
- ☐ Can I keep chickens or bees, and what are the setbacks?
- ☐ Do I need a building permit for a shed, greenhouse or hoophouse?
- ☐ Is a zoning verification letter available, and what does it cost?
- ☐ Who is the staff person I should keep in contact with?

5. Terms you will see

Base district (zone)	The main zoning designation of the property, such as a residential district.
Overlay	An extra layer of rules on top of the base district, for example for historic areas, flood zones or design review.
Use table	A chart listing which uses are allowed by right, allowed with a permit, or not allowed in each district.
By right (permitted use)	Allowed without special approval if you meet the standards.
Conditional or special use	Allowed only after a review and permit, often with conditions.
Accessory use	A use that supports the main use of the lot, such as a small farm on a house lot.
Setback	The minimum distance a structure must keep from a property line.
Nonconforming use	An existing use that was legal before the rules changed.

6. If the map or code is unclear

- Ask whether the online map is current; zoning maps are updated at intervals and a recent rezoning may not yet show.
- A few cities, such as Houston, have no conventional zoning but regulate land use through other rules; ask the city what applies.
- Land held by a public agency, a school or a church may follow different rules or review processes.
- Property in an HOA is also governed by private rules; check your covenants and your lease.

7. Notes from the call

Read more: urbanaglaw.org/planning-and-zoning/how-to-find-your-zoning/ , urbanaglaw.org/planning-and-zoning/ and urbanaglaw.org/planning-and-zoning/overview-of-us-cities/ . General information, not legal advice; the planning office’s written answer decides.