

# Urban food and the fight for a sustainable future

## Jon Walsh



*How a Kiwi in Tokyo, Japan is promoting real food and taking his urban farming enterprise global*

**Tokyo-based sustainability consultant [Jon Walsh](#) shares why he created innovative urban farming consultancy [Business Grow](#), it's impact, and what the future holds.**

### What do you do?

I teach urban farming to people primarily in Tokyo, Japan while also expanding to serve the global market.

### What key issue is behind your activities and how is it influencing your work?

Climate change is the primary driver. The warming climate is making food production increasingly difficult, and as we all need food to survive, it's critical we find more sustainable food growing solutions. Urban farming is one of them, and I think demand for related skills will continue to rise.

### How are your activities helping address the above issue?

Urban farming can make a big difference. Agriculture including forestry and other land use contribute approximately [24% of global annual emissions](#) as well as pollution.

Urban farming brings food closer to where it is consumed, which reduces [food miles](#), packaging costs, and pollution.

In addition, if no chemicals are used, there will be less environmental damage, namely poisoning of soil, water, us and other species.

### What is the most impacting thing you have done in your field, and who did it help?

I've taught nearly 1,000 people around the world how to grow food without chemicals. This has hopefully equipped them with the skills, knowledge and confidence to grow food for life wherever they live, and create an intergenerational impact.

### 10-second briefing: Jon Walsh

- Urban farming and sustainability consultant and instructor → [Bio](#)
- Taught over 870 people how to grow food
- Built gardens at [hotels](#), [schools](#) and [kindergartens](#) → [Gardens brochure](#)
- Working to train 2,000 students and 500 business people in [urban farming](#) and [sustainability](#) skills
- Aiming to launch [teaching programs](#) at 25 more schools and 50 businesses
- [Japan Times newspaper article](#).



Attendees at one of Jon's urban farming workshops, Tokyo, Japan

### What does Business Grow do?

We provide three main services: [urban farming training](#), [garden installation](#), and [resources](#). In terms of training, we run [urban farming programs](#) for people of all ages, and one-off [workshops](#) for [schools](#), [office teams](#), [embassies](#), and [other organizations](#). We have also recently launched [online urban farming workshops](#), which means training is now available to anyone, anywhere.

Regarding installing gardens (> [more](#)), our biggest project has been setting up an organic garden at the [Grand Hyatt Tokyo](#). Our [on-site urban farming consulting service](#) is also very popular and is now being offered [online](#).

### What are your objectives?

I want to make urban farming sexy – something that people want to try. My goals for 2020 are to reach the 1,000-people-taught mark, start teaching [online urban farming lessons](#) regularly to private clients and groups – particularly schools – overseas, secure my first office rooftop garden project, and sign up more hotel, school, and club clients in Japan.

- [Support request – Sponsored urban farming workshops & programs](#)
- [Support request – Rooftop garden](#)

### Where do you see your business in 5-10 years from now?

I aim to be managing a global enterprise providing training in [urban farming](#), [sustainability](#), and [disaster preparation & survival skills](#) and employing thousands of consultants, instructors and garden

builders who can help anyone in any city to start growing healthy urban food.

### What are your predictions for Tokyo's urban farming sector in 2020 and into 2021?

I see more garden installations, in particular at schools and offices, and growth in office and school urban farming training across the board. Office blocks with safe rooftops are ideal places to grow food and should be utilized more.

### What drives you?

There are so many positives in this business, from seeing the joy and amazement in a child's eyes when they see their first seeds sprout and taste their first leaves, to working with people to build gardens and showing families how they can grow food at home.

There's also the generational connection – by growing food, I am doing what many of my family and ancestors have done: put hands in soil to grow food. Gardening is a very grounding, humbling, and hugely inspiring activity, and combined with the freshness and taste of home-grown food, and the awareness of the health and environmental benefits, there is no shortage of motivation!

### What one thing do you wish you had done differently?

I'm pioneering this sector and am continually creating and trialing new products, services, and [funding concepts](#) aimed at making urban farming easier for clients to start. Partnering with a Japanese gardening expert to expand my impact earlier would have been a smart move.

### What do you need to expand?

Funding, exposure, and partners. Thankfully, my 'product' is already very popular. I'm looking for promoters – people who will share information about my work throughout their networks. I'm also looking for people who want to partner with me as instructors to expand my impact.

→ [Urban Farming Consultant](#) report.

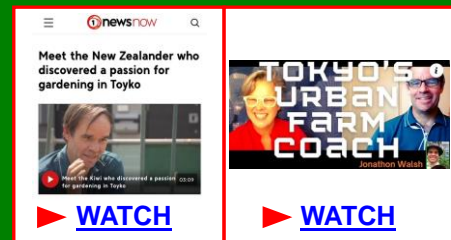
In the business sector, I'm looking for office workers, landlords and building owners in Tokyo who are interested in having a rooftop garden built. > [More information](#)

### Top tip for people considering starting urban farming

Buy/find a pot, some general purpose soil, and a packet of seeds or a seedling and grow something! Repeat as required.

> [Beginners Growing Kit](#)

### More Information



- [Service Summary](#)
- [Urban Farming Dashboard](#)
- [Garden Installation Brochure](#)

### Contact Jon

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