



GROW your own tree

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why Self-sufficiency?

Self-sufficiency is a way of life that focuses on growing our own food and other goods and reducing dependence on the store and other suppliers. It's a case of a process that promotes a sustainable way of life where people try to become more self-sufficient and less dependent on global shops. Self-sufficiency can mean gardening, raising animals, food production in greenhouses, making your own clothes ...

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10 reasons, why we should choose self-sufficiency and how it benefits us

(taken from Lončar S., Perdih F., Rotar I. 365 days of fresh vegetables from the home garden, 2017, pp. 9-17)

»Self-sufficiency provides the healthiest food«

People produce food with their own hands. The best way to influence the quality of our crops is to grow them without the use of pesticides and other harmful chemicals. We can also control the quality of the soil, which affects the quality of the produce. Fresh food that has just been harvested also has more nutrients and vitamin C than food that has been stored in warehouses or transported from distant places.

»Self-sufficiency heals«

Self-sufficiency can have a positive impact on individual health by producing food that is fresh and free from harmful substances. In addition, gardening is also physically active work, which is beneficial for maintaining cardiovascular health and reducing stress.

»Self-sufficiency is the most economical«

Self-sufficiency can be the most economical way to produce food, reducing the cost of buying food and other goods and reducing our dependence on the global market. Growing our own food and using renewable energy sources can reduce energy costs and save money.

»Self-sufficiency builds relationships«

Self-sufficiency can help build relationships by connecting with the community and sharing experiences and knowledge. Gardening together, exchanging seeds and seedlings, and participating in joint projects can strengthen community ties. In addition, a family that chooses to subsist can also build relationships within the family and spend more time together, which improves family dynamics.

Participation in joint projects helps to reduce isolation and loneliness, which is particularly important for the elderly and those living in rural areas.

»Self-sufficiency gives quality to our time«

Gardening and tending your own garden can be very physically active activities that have a positive impact on cardiovascular health and improve overall physical fitness. In addition, self-care also encourages other forms of recreation, such as cycling or walking in nature, as many of the "wild" plants we pick in nearby meadows and forests are edible and useful in both culinary and natural medicine. Self-sufficiency also contributes to improving people's overall health and well-being, as regular physical activity and contact with nature are key factors in maintaining well-being.

»Self-sufficiency awakens creativity«

Starting your own garden or acquiring other goods starts to develop new skills. Growing plants teaches you about growing and caring for plants while making your own products develops your handicraft skills. Self-sufficiency can also encourage creativity in making products for the home or garden, such as your own ceramic flower pots or products made from natural materials.

»Self-sufficiency is the best teacher«

Self-sufficiency gives us direct experience that can deepen our knowledge and understanding of nature, life processes and the environment. Growing plants teaches us about how to grow and care for plants, and growing food from our own garden teaches us about the effects of seasonal changes and natural cycles. Self-sufficiency can also encourage the development of skills, such as cooking or handicrafts, which can then be used in other aspects of our lives. At the same time, it encourages the development of autonomy and responsibility, as we become responsible for our own care and learn to make decisions about our lifestyle.

10. reasons, why we should choose self-sufficiency and how it benefits us

»Self-sufficiency helps the environment«

Self-sufficiency refers to the production of food, energy and other resources locally, so that we can reduce our dependence on distant sources and thus contribute to reducing our carbon footprint and other negative impacts on the environment. Self-sufficiency can also reduce the amount of waste we produce, as we can prepare our own food using seasonal ingredients, which avoids the need to pack and transport food from distant places.

»Self-sufficiency enables survival«

Self-sufficiency is about becoming self-reliant and developing the skills and knowledge needed to survive. Self-sufficiency fosters creativity, innovation and resilience as we learn to adapt to different circumstances and make use of local resources. This in turn develops new opportunities to generate income and improve living conditions.

Self-sufficiency through the production of our own plant seedlings allows us to create a new cycle of plant life, where seedlings develop into new plants that provide us with food, health and beauty. In this way, we can contribute to a sustainable way of life based on natural resources and nature conservation.

»Self-sufficiency connects us to creation«

Self-care encourages us to connect with nature and its rhythms. By growing our own food and other resources, we become more aware of the cycles of growth and harvesting, which are determined by natural processes such as sunlight, temperature, rainfall and soil. When we grow food and other resources, we develop a better relationship with creation by learning to respect its laws and to care for its balance. In doing so, we contribute to preserving the environment and conserving the natural resources that are essential for our survival.

The **GROW your own tree** project brings together volunteers who are actively working to preserve the environment and use natural resources sustainably. We are trying to spread awareness of self-reliance as a way of life that connects us to creation and brings us back to nature. We recognise that food is not just a product we buy in a shop, but that every plant has a story to tell and that every food can contribute to our nutritional, physical and mental well-being. We believe that a self-sustainable way of life allows us to be more independent, to have better control over the quality of our food, to lower our costs and to reduce our carbon footprint.



Being self-sufficient means that I can take care of my own basic needs

»Self-sufficiency refers to the ability to provide ourselves with the food, energy and other goods we need to live without depending on others. Being self-sufficient means being able to obtain these goods from our own resources or from the community in which we live. If we live in a city and do not have a garden, we can still try to be self-sufficient in other ways. For example, we can choose to plant a few plants on the balcony, get food from local farmers, catch rainwater to water the plants and so on. It is important to realise that we can contribute to our own self-sufficiency, no matter where we live.

The essence and purpose of self-sufficiency is first and foremost to provide for the basic needs of the individual, the community and society, and to reduce dependence on external resources, thereby increasing resilience to potential crises or changes. Self-sufficiency can also contribute to a better quality of life and environmental sustainability by reducing reliance on global transport and production chains.

For me, being self-sufficient means being able to take care of my own basic needs such as food, water, energy and health without depending on others. I would be very happy if I had a garden, because it would allow me to get a lot of vegetables and fruits that I can use for cooking and eating. In addition, I also like to make my own products, such as soap, body creams and others, which helps me to save money and spend less. I think that self-sufficiency is important for everyone, no matter where they live or what their lifestyle is, because it allows us to have more independence, environmental sustainability and a healthier lifestyle.«

Laura



And yet it's worth it and, above all, it's delicious

»For me, self-sufficiency is all about growing my favourite vegetables, fruit, herbs and flowers in my own garden. Gardening activates me and offers me activities such as planning, planting, watering, weeding, etc., where I can focus on one thing, relax and calm my mind. And above all, I am always learning, experimenting and interacting with nature. I am improving my garden year after year, adding to it and spending more and more free time in it.

It gives me pleasure to watch the plants grow and develop, to watch them blossom and form fruit, to admire them and to use them with pleasure. I direct my own cultivation - I only follow the advice of experts that I feel fits my lifestyle, values, abilities, beliefs and needs. The best part is that I have a plant on my counter, table or pot within five minutes of wanting it - no need to get in the car and drive to the shop.

Of course, it is not always as "romantic" as I described above. Gardening takes a lot of effort, perseverance and the occasional disappointment when a crop doesn't turn out the way I thought it would, or doesn't turn out at all... But it's worth it and, above all, it's delicious.«

Katja

My path to self-sufficiency was quite simple

»I have been involved in subsistence farming for 15 years. My journey to self-sufficiency has been quite simple. The decision was made in me when I left the employment because of my family situation at the time.

Since we are a family of five and I strive to make my products as natural and organic as possible, I started to look into gardening. I should mention that today I grow my own seedlings from my own seeds. I follow trends and I also like to try new things. I avoid all treated and hybrid seeds and seedlings. I only trust in myself and in the seedlings I grow. I like to chat with older people and gain further experience in this field.

I appeal to all those who have soil, a bit of will and a love for nature to try to grow as many of your own vegetables as possible in your home garden. No previous experience is necessary, as gardening is a very varied field. That's how you will taste the authentic flavour of the produce and you will save money.«

Bernarda



When I finally got my own piece of land, the first thing I did was to start a garden

»As a little girl, I was fascinated by my mother's garden and the beautiful flowers around it. I always wanted to have my own garden and my own crops. When I finally got my piece of land in Dolenjska, the first thing I did was to make my own garden. I do more or less everything myself in the garden. I also made the wooden raised beds all by myself.

I plant my own vegetables in the garden for my own use, but I also love to try planting new vegetables. I'm happy when I succeed. I also like flowers, for which I have a special bed.«

Barbara

Self-sufficiency is how I make a good living

»For me, self-sufficiency is not just about gardening and growing vegetables and fruit for myself and my family. For me, self-sufficiency has a much deeper and broader meaning. To provide for a good life as much consciously and responsibly as possible - wherever possible. First and foremost for yourself, for your loved ones, but also for your social middle. To educate yourself, to keep up to date with new developments, to experiment and find new solutions yourself, to share your knowledge with others and to incorporate good practice examples that others have shared with you or that you have seen on social media. Whether it's to maintain or gain good health, supply fruit and vegetables, store crops, forage for edible or medicinal wild plants, clean drinking water, alternative energy sources, preserve clean nature, build human-friendly buildings, or anything that enables people to be healthy, well and live a creative and quality life.«

Aurora



Planting

»The seedlings we sowed in February are now moving to their new homes. Confident that there will be no major frost, we can transplant them outdoors in peace. I plant peppers, tomatoes, cucumbers or any above-ground vegetable in these openings. The advantage of the foil is that it is relatively moist underneath and, above all, there is no hoeing. The manufacturers recommend keeping it in the same place for several years, but I move it every now and then to turn the soil and fertilise it.

It is important to me to get everything planted out as soon as possible, while there is still moisture, rain. Later, when we plant everything the drier it gets and the plants have no natural moisture. We are in a dry, low karst area, we have a lot of sand, stones and garden areas, which is where my garden is.

I have planted everything out, the onions and garlic are already out. Flowers are also part of my garden, they attract pollinators, they are beautiful to look at, they smell and they remind me of my mother and grandmother, who always had room for zinnias, asters, cloves and marigolds.«



...

April brought the proverbial changeable weather. Accordingly, the seedlings looked out in a few days. Everything I planted or sowed, except zucchini and cucumbers, sprouted. For the zucchini, I suspect the seed was defective. In the case of cucumbers, the seeds or sprouts were eaten by crickets. I replanted both. ☹️

An interesting thing happened to me, and last year I picked up a seed bulb more hastily. This year, just as much as was harvested sprouted again. I let it go and now I have an onion – a seedling. I weeded it and I wonder if the crop will be as rich as the one planted in the row.

Changeable weather, rain – sun, does not benefit my beans. It barely made leaves, it's already all yellow from the fungus. I hope it will coat without the spray.

The cabbage was attacked by fleas, I sprinkled it with ashes and I hope it takes care of them. Otherwise, there is already a lot and there will be no special damage.«

Lidija

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