

Planting with Purpose at Urban Tilth in Richmond, California

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How Doria Robinson, the force behind the community-focused urban farm, transformed a 'food desert' into verdant farms, gardens, and open spaces in Richmond, California.

by [the Civil Eats editors](#), [Civil Eats](#)

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Hunger is a choice we make as a society. There's no reason, with the amount of food that we grow, that people should be hungry or [get] sick from food," says Doria Robinson, the executive director of Urban Tilth, a community-based urban agriculture organization in Richmond, California, that takes vacant public land and transforms it into vibrant, living spaces.

And it's needed, because Richmond is one of many cities impacted by "food apartheid"—also called "food deserts" or "food swamps." In other words, it's difficult to buy affordable, good-quality, fresh food there.

Trained as a watershed restoration ecologist, Robinson's lifelong commitment to environmental justice and food sovereignty is exemplified in Urban Tilth's North Richmond

Farm, a once-blighted three-acre parcel, now home to a multitude of row crops planted in rich, black soil. The organization also offers educational and environmental programs, runs six community and school gardens across Richmond, two community supported agriculture (CSA) programs serving roughly 500 families a week, and several weekly free farmstands.

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Cover image sourced from Civil Eats – “Doria Robinson in the fields at Urban Tilth.”

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