

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to understand how urban agriculture unfolds among suburban hobbyists in Johannesburg, South Africa. The paper focuses on identity development through gardening, knowledge production and the use of space.

The paper is designed to have autoethnography, theory and online interview data interwoven throughout the paper, which was inspired through the pandemic and the lockdown regulations in South Africa. The research allowed for identifying a group of gardeners who I call 'Urban Agricultural Hobbyist' (UAH) specifically located in suburban Johannesburg. They carry substantial knowledge of urban agriculture and gardening and allowed for the research to move away from viewing urban agriculture as only a food security solution and instead as a knowledge producing space.

Key findings for the research are identifying the UAH group as a category of gardeners. By doing that I was able to identify three knowledge categories; generational, social/ community and formal education. This led me to look at how space is used within the garden. I observed how the gardening changes space and its meaning, this however takes place mainly within the confines of the garden walls and only faint traces reach out into the suburb itself.