

Farm Towers: Urban Agriculture Goes Vertical

Project Titles: Farm Towers: Urban

Agriculture Goes Vertical

Coordinators: Ashton Bohling

Location: Auburn, Nebraska

SARE Grants: \$1,999

Duration: 2017-2019

To read the full project reports, go to
<https://projects.sare.org/>, and search for project
number YENC17-108.

In southeast Nebraska where corn and livestock fields dominate the agricultural landscape, Auburn High School agriculture teacher, Ashton Bohling, offers a variety of agricultural education opportunities for curious youth. Students have access to an aquaponics system (an aquaculture system with tilapia) and a 24x48' greenhouse. With support from a \$1,999 NCR-SARE Youth Educator grant, Bohling was able to add garden towers to the school's experiential learning opportunities. Garden towers are vertical, self-contained gardening and composting systems.

“As our population increases and urbanization increases, we are losing land,” said Bohling. “The farm tower can visually show how to grow 50 plants in 4 square feet. The farm tower also utilizes a vermiculture composting system with worms. This is a neat way to teach students about organic matter and the benefits of earthworms.”

After the initial purchase of the garden towers, students assembled the tower pieces and attached the wheels and casters to the towers. They also raised composting worms and added them to the towers, improving their understanding of vermiculture and composting.



As part of their experiential learning, high school students in Auburn, Nebraska assemble a garden tower.

“This project allowed students to think creatively about agriculture and recognize that agriculture doesn't have to be growing corn and doesn't need to have acres of land,” said Bohling. “Students are able to see how they can include this type of agriculture in their future, regardless of what their career or lifestyle is.”

For more information on Bohling's NCR-SARE Youth-Educator grant project, visit the SARE project reporting website. Simply search by the project number, YENC17-108, at <https://projects.sare.org/>, or contact the NCR-SARE office.