



## Garden Entrepreneurship and Covid-19

Is the pandemic influencing stakeholders to start gardening?



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LUCE FS#13-B-2020  
01/15/2021

The market's food supply and the price volatility of agricultural products are two of the leading economic factors that stress stakeholders during the Coronavirus pandemic. Consumers will always buy the food they need most regardless of the price. In 2020, Lincoln University Cooperative Extension offered a gardening entrepreneurship program to support stakeholders with knowledge and resources to create an additional food source and supplement their household food supplies. From April to July 2020, the program received feedback from 92 stakeholders worldwide. We asked these stakeholders about their main reason for starting to garden during these pandemic times. Their responses were analyzed and clustered into three categories: a) to create food security, b) economic savings and c) socio-cultural reasons.

Demographics indicate that most participants were female (79.3 percent) and most (54.3 percent) were between 31 and 50 years of age. Most of them (80.4 percent) also had a college degree. They belonged to different ethnic groups, such as Caucasian (47.8 percent), Latino and African American (18.5 percent for each group), Asian American (2.2 percent), and other ethnicities (13 percent, mainly from international participants). Participants were from the Jefferson City area (20.7percent), the Columbia area (14.1 percent), other places



in Missouri (48.9 percent), other states (5.4 percent) and countries other than the U.S. (10.9 percent).

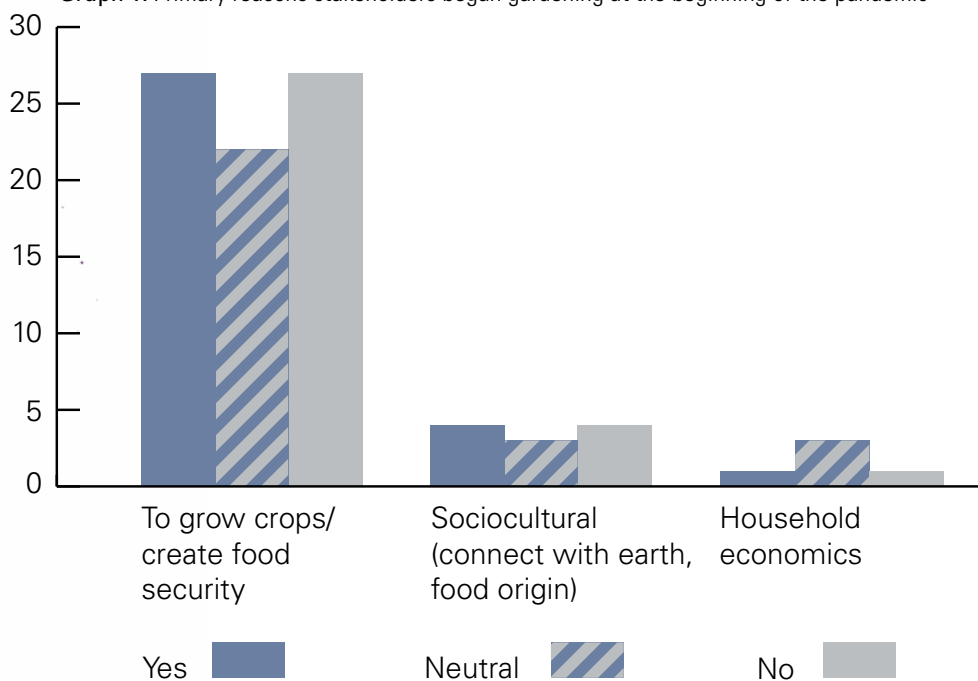
Results indicate that at the beginning of the pandemic, the main reason for stakeholders (n=92) to enter gardening training and gardening start-up activities was that most of them (82.6 percent) sought to learn how to grow crops. See Table 1 below.

**Table 1.** How likely Covid-19 influenced stakeholders' reasons to start gardening

n=92	Yes	Neutral	No	Total
To grow crops to create food security	27	22	27	76
Sociocultural (connect earth, food origin)	4	3	4	11
Household economics	1	3	1	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>92</b>

In this population, 27 of the stakeholders (34.8 percent) wanted to start gardening because they had food insecurity concerns related to the pandemic, while a similar proportion (34.8 percent) just wanted to know how to garden. A large proportion of participants (30.4 percent) were undecided about how likely the pandemic influenced their gardening decisions. The graph below illustrates the primary reasons why stakeholders start gardening activities.

**Graph 1.** Primary reasons stakeholders began gardening at the beginning of the pandemic



Source: Agriculture Economics and Marketing Program- LUCE