

GREEN LIVING

# Eco-friendly focus, gear for gardens

Urban gardening allows homeowners to eat more organically.

By Lori Johnston  
For the AJC

Chickens and bees are part of urban gardening in neighborhoods, and some of those efforts are on display this spring.

David Cotton and Kelly Enzor's home, which is on the Grant Park 2013 Home and Garden Tour on May 11-12, was surrounded by just dirt for about 10 years, as their two dogs and two historic trees made it impossible to grow anything, said Enzor, a painter. After their pet boxer died six years ago, they turned their attention to the backyard. A shed and patio with a built-in grill, refrigerator, bar and fire pit were added first. About four years ago, the couple added a chicken coop to the space, which also has a vegetable garden.

"We originally were very concerned about starting to eat more organically and locally," said Cotton, a vice president in a consulting company.

Their five hens typically lay a total of three to four eggs daily during the summer, enabling them to give away eggs to friends and family.

"We recognize that we can't feed ourselves completely. If we can supplement some of



David Cotton and Kelly Enzor added a chicken coop to their Grant Park home in an effort to eat more organically and locally. CONTRIBUTED BY GRANT PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

what we have and if more people supplemented a little bit of what they eat, I think it would be a lighter footprint all around," Cotton said.

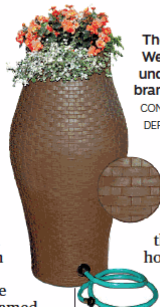
Cotton built the chicken coop and the run, which stretches across the backyard. The chicken coop and vegetable plots, which grow greens such as kale, chard and lettuce and herbs, are both framed.

The couple use their compost as soil that tops the plant beds. In creating the yard, all the grass was removed and replaced with mulch and pine straw, lessening the demands for watering, and rain barrels collect water for the vegetable garden.

Beekeeping also is part of an effort to live in an eco-



The Plant Nanny stakes deliver water from the recycled bottles to the center of the root system where plants need it most. CONTRIBUTED BY PLANT NANNY

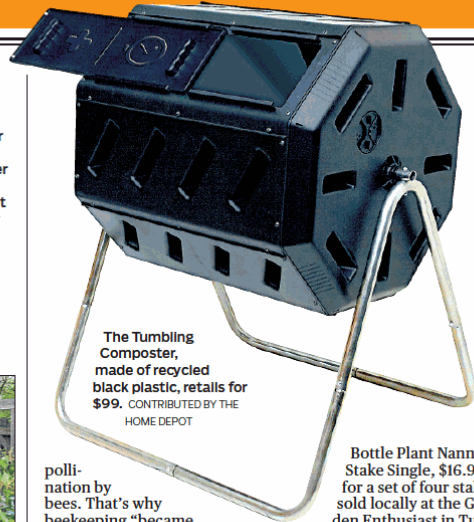


The Wicker Basket Weave Rain Barrel, under the Rescue brand, retails for \$119. CONTRIBUTED BY THE HOME DEPOT

friendly way. Cameron and Joy Ayer will host a beekeeper talk and honey tasting at their Cherokee Place home at 1 p.m. Saturday, May 11, and Sunday, May 12, as part of the Grant Park tour ([grantpark.org/tour](http://grantpark.org/tour)).

"I had two other neighbors on my block that owned honey bees, and we got a taste of that Grant Park gold and decided we would take it on ourselves," said Joy Ayer.

According to Ayer, it's been estimated up to one-third of our food can be attributed to



The Tumbling Composter, made of recycled black plastic, retails for \$99. CONTRIBUTED BY THE HOME DEPOT

pollination by bees. That's why beekeeping "became imperative, not just a hobby," she said.

**Green Garden Gear**  
Here are four eco-friendly items on the market for gardens.

**SlipColor:** SlipColor was created to cut down on the number of plastic plant containers that end up in landfills, according to the Mississippi-based company. The colorful wraps, made of PVC-coated vinyl mesh fabric, can slip around containers in gardens, patios, balconies and decks. \$9.99-12.99 (3-gallon), \$5.99-\$7.99 (1-gallon), [slipcolor.com](http://slipcolor.com).

**Wicker Basket Weave Rain Barrel:** To conserve water, the Rescue brand rain barrel can hold as much as 60 gallons of water. Also comes with a planter. \$119, from the Home Depot ([homedepot.com](http://homedepot.com)).

**Plant Nanny:** The terracotta watering stake can hold recycled wine bottles or plastic water bottles that serve as a reservoir for water. The stake, which inserts into the soil next to the plant, can indicate when it's time to water the plant, according to the New Hampshire-based Plant Nanny. \$6.95 for Recycle a Wine

Bottle Plant Nanny Stake Single, \$16.95 for a set of four stakes, sold locally at the Garden Enthusiast in Tucker ([thegardenenthusiast.com](http://thegardenenthusiast.com)) and Boss Brothers Country Store in Loganville ([bossbrothers.com](http://bossbrothers.com)); also at Amazon.com.

**Tumbling Composter:** Two chambers hold kitchen and yard waste; made of 100 percent recycled UV-inhibited black plastic. \$99, from the Home Depot ([homedepot.com](http://homedepot.com)).



The SlipColor, which goes around containers, is made of vinyl mesh fabric with a PVC coating in a variety of colors. CONTRIBUTED BY SLIPCOLOR