



The Dervaes Family: Pioneering the Urban Farm

Take a tour of the Dervaes family's urban homestead in Pasadena, Calif.

An Interview with Jules Dervaes

An Interview with Jordanne Dervaes

In the bustling city of Pasadena, Calif., lives a family of urban-farm pioneers. Jules Dervaes has spent more than 20 years cultivating his 8,700-square-foot urban farm with the help of his three adult children, Anaïs, Justin and Jordanne.

The Dervaes family's example of sustainability stands out in their quiet suburban neighborhood. The front yard is a lush agricultural oasis yielding 6,000 pounds of produce annually, which is sold to local restaurants and farmers' markets. Their farm livestock (goats, chickens, ducks and rabbits) replace the typical suburban pets and contribute to garden compost. In addition, the Dervaes family has undertaken other sustainable pursuits such as solar-power paneling, homemade biodiesel fuel and water reclamation projects.

In 2001, the Dervaes family launched Path to Freedom to document their urban-homesteading progress and to encourage others to adopt a sustainable lifestyle. So far, their website has attracted urban farmers from more than 120 countries. The shift in perception toward sustainable living and urban farming emboldens Jules Dervaes in his endeavor to reduce his carbon footprint. "This is a sustainable family," says Jules. "Our plan is to make a sustainable community."