

## Extension Promotes DIY Aquaponics

*A Zoom session on DIY aquaponics and all of the “how to” offered to people looking for new ways to supplement their diet—this short vignette is part of our “Virginia Food Systems and COVID-19 Story Collection Project” that aims to highlight, collect, and share stories of hope and resilience in our food system amidst the pandemic. Find out more about this project and view our entire series on [our website](#).*

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As the Coronavirus pandemic continues to ebb and flow with recent surges in the number of cases, there is growing interest in knowing how to produce and prepare your own food. Because of a webinar presented by Virginia Cooperative Extension and Virginia State University in Petersburg, know-how on building aquaponics system helped people learn about raising fish and producing vegetables in one closed-system loop. The session took place over Zoom, a videoconferencing software, to ensure the safety of all parties involved—presenters and participants alike. The Zoom session was titled “Backyard Aquaponics: Raising Fish and Plants in Your Backyard Using Aquaponics.”

“Aquaponics is a form of agriculture that combines aquaculture (raising fish) with hydroponics (gardening without soil)” (NBC12, 2020). Such practices can be easily implemented on a small-scale basis at practically any residence. The presenters for the Zoom session were Dr. David Crosby, Chris Mullins, Dr. Brian Nerrie, and Dr. Chyer Kim.

The presentation addressed “an overview of aquaponics, designing a small-scale system, selecting the right fish and plants, maintaining water quality and fish health” and even marketing (NBC12, 2020). In aquaponics-based



*An infographic showing the aquaponics cycle. Image by University of Florida*



*An aquaponics system showing lettuce production and tanks for fish.  
Photo courtesy of Virginia Cooperative Extension*

agriculture, there is virtually no need for pesticides and herbicides. Further, there is a lesser need of labor inputs, and not as much physical space is required when compared to traditional methods of production agriculture.

For more information on aquaponics, [click here](#). Learn more about Virginia Cooperative Extension on [their website](#). Information on the economic feasibility of aquaponics systems can be found on [this Virginia Tech website](#). This short vignette was adapted from an original NBC12 article from May 24, 2020.

### **References**

NBC12 Newsroom. (2020, May 24). *VSU offering a build your own aquaponics garden*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nbc12.com/2020/05/24/vsu-offering-build-your-own-aquaponics-garden/>