

City: 'If something is not permitted it is prohibited.'

Should Americans have a right to garden in their own yards?

If you looked at this question, shook your head, and answered, "Of course! Why would we not?" then it would seem there is still some common sense left in the world.

Unfortunately, that common sense doesn't always extend to the powers that be, and the citizens of Columbiana, Ohio, are learning that the hard way.

According to [an article](#) in the *Salem News*, the city government of Columbiana recently informed citizens that they don't have a right to plant and maintain a garden in their own yards:

"Municipal Attorney Daniel Blasdell said the garden issue came about as a result of the chicken issue.

He explained that people were asking why chickens couldn't be allowed in the community while gardens were.

The city had no laws pertaining to residential gardens, which means they were technically not allowed.

According to the city's laws, if something is not permitted it is prohibited.

'Right now, if there is not something expressly in this code that says that you can have one, you technically can't,' Blakeman confirmed."

Residents were appalled upon hearing this news. Naturally, they had thought that if they owned the property, they should be free to till the ground and grow food if they choose to do so. Such an attitude was slightly confusing to Municipal

Attorney Blakeman:

“He went on to say that the city’s effort to make a law allowing gardens is something that should be seen as a good move by residents.

‘The intention of it is to not to take away, it is to give,’ he said.”

In other words, there’s nothing to fear. The wise and benevolent government knows what’s best for citizens and will tell them when and where and how they can plant a garden in their own yard.

City leaders likely don’t know it, but Thomas Jefferson would adamantly disagree. In his 1821 autobiography, Jefferson [explained](#) that government works best when those who are closest to a jurisdiction oversee it. As such, individual property should not be governed by the federal or even the city government, but by the owner himself:

“Every state again is divided into counties, each to take care of what lies within its local bounds; each county again into townships or wards, to manage minuter details; and every ward into farms, to be governed each by its individual proprietor. Were we directed from Washington when to sow, & when to reap, we should soon want bread. It is by this partition of cares, descending in gradation from general to particular, that the mass of human affairs may be best managed for the good and prosperity of all.”

It was [recently reported](#) that many Americans today are feeling the pinch and struggling to make ends meet. Is it possible that this lack of prosperity is due in part to the lack of autonomy Americans have? Would we see a resurgence in prosperity if the government backed off and realized that its job is not to regulate every minute aspect of American lives?

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