

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

First Regular Session

House Bill No. **4747**



Introduced by HON. DELPHINE GAN LEE

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Food Forest Gardening is defined as a food production and land management system based on replicating woodland systems, in which trees and plants have been replaced by fruit and nut trees, bushes, shrubs, herbs, and vegetables which have yields directly useful to humans. There has been a shift towards Food Forest Gardening in recent years due to the process being a sustainable source of food production with minimal cost.

Food Forest Gardening is meant to be a low-maintenance sustainable plant-based food production and agro-forestry system making use of as little space as possible. Robert Adrian de Jauralde Hart, a pioneer of forest gardening in temperate zones, believed that *"tens of millions of us have access to gardens or to open spaces where trees can be planted... and if full advantage can be taken of the potentialities that are available even in heavily built up areas, new 'city forests' can arise."*

This bill seeks to promote and institutionalize food forest gardening in the country as a sustainable land use system to address the limited resources for sustainable food production with minimal farming costs but with increased harvests even in small plots of land. The Philippine Food Forest Gardening Commission (PFFGC) shall be created as an attached agency to the Department of Agriculture (DA), and shall act as the policy-making body for the effective implementation of this Act. Local Government Units (LGUs) educational institutions and other stakeholders are mandated to participate in the program. Likewise, the Philippine Center for Food Forest Gardening (PCFFG) shall be established under the Commission, to provide information, training, education, expertise, and best practices to implement the Food Forest Program.

In lieu of the foregoing, the urgent passing of this bill is thus earnestly sought.


DELPHINE GAN-LEE
Sectoral Representative
AGRI Party-List

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Introduced by Hon. Delphine Gan Lee

**AN ACT PROMOTING FOOD FOREST GARDENING, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR,
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippine in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. *Short Title* This Act shall be known as the "*Food Forest Gardening Act*"

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy* It is hereby declared the policy of the State to build, preserve, and maintain a healthy ecosystem; protect and develop biodiversity and habitats for wildlife; conserve the country's crop genetic diversity and heirloom plants as a strategy for climate change adaptation, mitigation and resiliency; and promote public awareness on ecological and sustainable use of land resources for food production and other products. Towards this end, the government, in coordination with the business interests, such as land developers and social entrepreneurs and the civil society, shall promote and integrate Food Forest Gardening by establishing and developing community gardens in the country as a sustainable land use system for food production and other agricultural products for economic and societal development.

SECTION 3. *Definitions of Terms* The following terms shall mean:

- (a) **Agro-Forestry** – a land-use management system in which trees or shrubs are grown around or among crops or pasture land and combines shrubs and trees in agricultural and forestry technologies to create more diverse, productive, profitable healthy, ecologically sound and sustainable land-use systems;
- (b) **Crop Rotation** – practice of successive planting of different crops on the same land to improve soil fertility and crop yield, reduce soil erosion and help control insects and diseases;
- (c) **Forest Gardening** – "multi-layered crop farming" or a low maintenance and sustainable method of food production that is based on woodland ecosystems, incorporating fruit and nut trees, shrubs, herbs, vines, and perennial vegetables

which yields directly useful to humans and a system of agro-forestry that creates diverse, productive, healthy, ecologically-sound and sustainable system of land use;

- (d) **Companion Planting** – planting of different crops in close proximity for ecological pest control, pollination, providing habitat for beneficial creatures, maximizing use of space, and to otherwise increase crop productivity;
- (e) **Perennial Vegetables** – plants that live for more than two (2) years.
- (f) **Ecosystem** – a complex set of relationships among the living resources, habitats, and residents of an area which include plants, trees, animals, fish, birds, microorganisms, water, soil, and people;
- (g) **Sustainable Land-Use Management** – use of land resources, including soil, water, animals and plant, for the production of goods to meet changing human needs while simultaneously ensuring the long-term productive potential of these resources and the maintenance of their environmental functions.

SECTION 4. *Institutionalization of the Philippine Food Forest Gardening Program* – in order to ensure food security and regenerate ecosystem functions through a system of layers of vegetation, the Philippine Food Forest Gardening Program, hereinafter referred to as the "Program", is hereby institutionalized. For this purpose, Food Forest Gardening may be established in the following places:

- a. Any parcel or portion of land;
- b. Public spaces such as urban yards or city and municipal parks;
- c. Actual yards of households.
- d. Community or common spaces of land developments;
- e. Urban housing projects
- f. Unutilized and idle public land; and
- g. Portion of rural farms;

SECTION 5. *Objective of the Program* – The following are the objectives of the Program:

- a. To introduce low maintenance food production through agro-forestry;
- b. To maximize land use and provide a significant source of income for urban and rural communities;
- c. To transform farmers from mere mono-crop cultivators to multi-crop agripreneurs;
- d. To establish sustainable food forest gardening using mostly perennial vegetables through crop rotation and companion planting in the country;

- e. To serve as a model for the youth inspiring them towards sustainable agriculture;
- f. To utilize idle lands and consequently create beautiful living spaces; and
- g. To help farmers build a productive farming communities and produce high-quality crops for the country's economy.

SECTION 6. *Creation and Composition of the Philippine Food Forest Gardening*

Commission – There is hereby created the Philippine Food Forest Gardening Commission, hereinafter referred to as the “Commission”, which shall be attached to the Department of Agriculture (DA) and shall act as a policy-making body for effective and continuing implementation of the provisions of this Act. It shall be headed by the Secretary of the DA, as

Chairperson, and the Secretary of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) as Co-Chairperson. The following shall be its members:

- a. The Director of the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI);
- b. a representative of the Department of Environmental and Natural Resource (DENR);
- c. a representative of the Department of Finance (DOF);
- d. a representative of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST);
- e. a representative of the Department of Education (DepEd);
- f. a representative of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED);
- g. two (2) representatives of the land developers association; and
- h. two (2) representative of Non-Government Organizations (NGOs).

SECTION 7. *Powers and Function of the Commission* – The Commission shall have the following powers and functions:

1. Formulate framework, plan, and policy for the Philippine Food Forest Gardening in both national and local levels;
2. Prepare a comprehensive Manual for the Philippine Food Forest Gardening;
3. Formulate guidelines for the food forest gardening training program for Local Government Units (LGUs), concerned government agencies and offices; teachers or instructors of both public and private schools teaching subjects related to agriculture, particularly those under the K to 12 program, and other interested members of society, such as non-government organizations (NGOs);
4. Devise and implement resource development scheme to ensure continued allocation of funds;
5. Assess overall progress of the food forest training program and review the monitoring and evaluation results;
6. Submit annual report to Congress; and
7. Perform such other tasks for the effective implementation of this Act.

SECTION 8. *Participation of LGUs* – All local government units (LGUs) are hereby mandated to establish the Program which shall focus on conducting a comprehensive food forest gardening in their areas. The concerned LGUs shall encourage all home developers, owners, neighborhood, community and/or People's Organizations to participate in the Program.

SECTION 9. *Incentives* – Those participating in the program shall be granted incentives including, but not limited to, exemption from payment of real estate tax, exemption from existing rules and regulations prohibiting farming or growing food in backyards, patios or houses, and other incentives as may be provided by the commission and the law.

SECTION 10. *Establishment of the Philippine Center for Food Forest Gardening* – The Philippine Center for Food Forest Gardening is hereby established, which shall be under the Commission and shall provide information, trainings, education, expertise, best practices and networking to implement the food forest gardening program. It shall likewise provide the necessary secretariat, administrative, and technical support to the Commission.

SECTION 11. *Management Fund* – For the implementation of this Act, a management fund shall be established for the following purposes:

- a. Research;
- b. Information and educational campaign;
- c. Trainings; and
- d. Pilot programs.

SECTION 12. *Integration of the Program in School Curriculum* – The Program shall be integrated in the academic curriculum for senior high school and college students taking up Agriculture, Practical Arts, Home Economics and/or other subjects related to Agriculture.

SECTION 13. *Appropriations* – The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act is hereby authorized to be appropriated from the budget of the DA, DILG, DepEd, CHED and DENR not otherwise appropriated. Thereafter, the funds shall be included in the annual budget of the aforementioned agencies.

SECTION 14. *Implementing Rules and Regulations* - Within thirty (30) days from the date of effectivity of this Act, the Committee, in consultation with the PMO, shall formulate and promulgate the rules and regulations for the proper implementation of this Act.

SECTION 15. *Separability Clause* - If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected by such declaration shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 16. *Repealing and Amendatory Clause* - All laws, executive and administrative orders, rules and regulations or parts thereof, inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SECTION 17. *Effectivity Clause* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the *Official Gazette* or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,