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Wild Sage and one of the architects of Silver Sage. "It doesn't change our carbon footprint much, but it gets us outside and interacting with each other." In addition, each unit has its own garden space, where some residents use intensive container-gardening techniques to grow herbs, vegetables and more berries.

The communities plan to convert another open space into a community orchard for use, not just by cohousing or Holiday Neighborhood, but by the greater Boulder community.

Integrated Agriculture

Geos Net-Zero Energy Neighborhood, Arvada, Colo.

About to begin construction in an industrial suburb of Denver, Colo., Geos will be an urban, mixed-use neighborhood that includes two cohousing communities and three integrated community gardens. Instead of adding agricultural features to the community after construction, Geos has planned agricultural use from the beginning. "We're trying to create conditions where it's easy for residents to have a relationship with their resources," says architect Michael Tavel. "We want to provide more opportunities for community agriculture." In addition to the community gardens and composting areas to support them, Geos will include linear parks lined with fruit trees. Each street within the community will grow a different variety of fruit tree, and the trees will be maintained and distributed by a cooperative community association. Residents may choose to plant additional gardens in the linear parks and in their own yards. Novel landscaping and grading will capture more spring snow and rain runoff in the open spaces, preserving moisture in an arid climate.

Community Farming, A Short Walk from Downtown

Ecovillage at Ithaca, Ithaca, N.Y.

It's hard to call Ecovillage at Ithaca an urban farm when it owns 177 acres of land, but this unique community is only 1½ miles from downtown Ithaca and Cornell University. Founded on environmentally sound principles and a strong agrarian component, Ecovillage at Ithaca includes two established cohousing neighborhoods—Frog and Song with 30 homes each—and is currently building a third neighborhood, Tree, with an additional 30 homes. Each neighborhood has its own common house and common garden. The Song neighborhood has an additional kitchen garden. Song has a communal flock of chickens for egg and manure production, and Frog has a private flock on the grounds, as well.

In addition, the community leases some of its extensive grounds to farms. Ten-acre West Haven Farm is owned by community founders John and Jen Bokaer-Smith. The farm has been certified organic and sells produce to the Ithaca community via 260 CSA shares and the Ithaca Farmers' Market. The farm has recently reorganized as an LLC with about 20 investors, many of whom are Ecovillage residents. While some Ecovillage residents purchase farm shares, the majority are bought by nonresidents. Ecovillage common meals frequently use produce from the farm. Five-acre Kestrel Perch Berry Farm is owned by resident Katie Creeger. She uses a unique CSA model, growing only permaculture berries that shareholders pick themselves. She also offers some limited public picking times.

Many of the Ecovillage residents are active with both farms, either as paid staff, CSA members or crop-mobbing volunteers. Former resident Joanna Green reports that West Haven Farm also acts as an incubator for other small farmers in the area. uf

COURTESY ECOVILLAGE AT ITHACA

COURTESY ENO COMMONS

Sustainable practices, such as collecting greywater in cisterns, are often employed in cohousing.

Jenise Aminoff grew up on a small urban farm in Albuquerque, N.M. She works as a technical writer and freelances from her home in Cambridge Cohousing.