

URBAN FARM

S U S T A I N A B L E C I T Y L I V I N G

GROW HOT PEPPERS

*on a windowsill
or a balcony*

**STREET
SMARTS**

*Forage for
Urban Edibles*

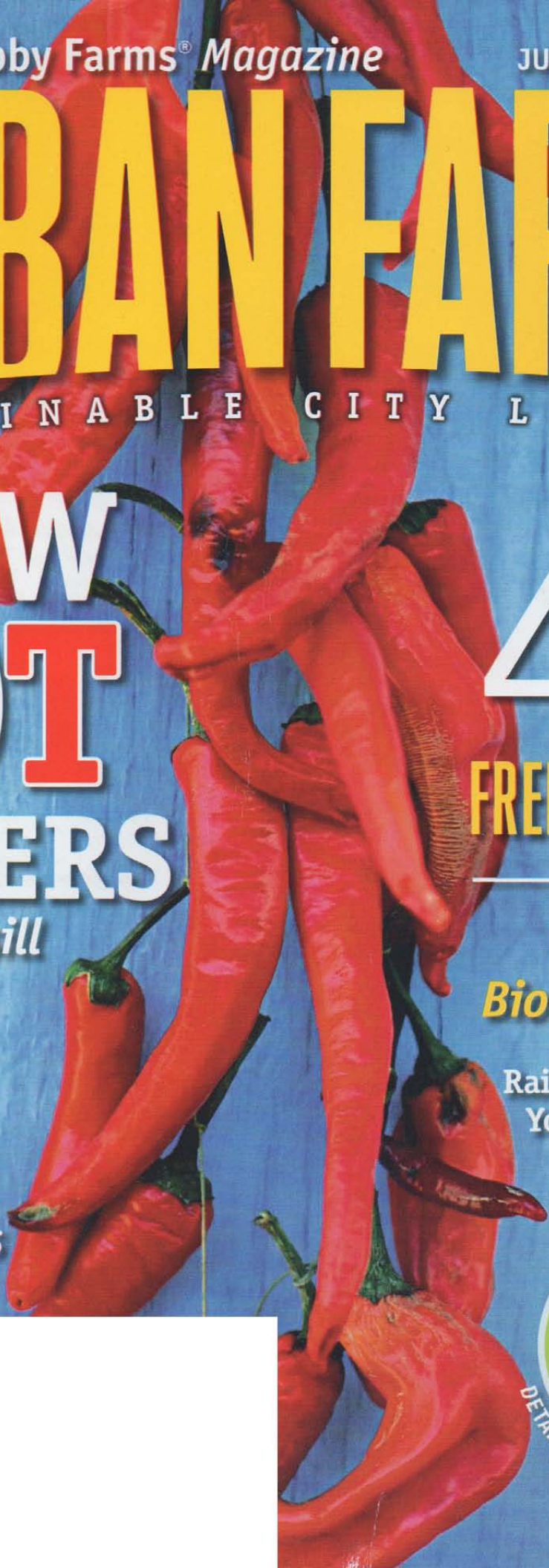
4 EASY
STEPS TO
FREEZER JAM

*Simple
Bio-retention*

Incorporate a
Rain Garden into
Your Landscape

**SWEET
CORN SEASON
ARRIVES!**

DETAILS AND RECIPES INSIDE



GreenTOP

Before



After



We all know that urban expansion and suburban sprawl can do a number on farmland and natural habitats. In Portland, Ore., one group is working to reverse this damage by depaving paradise, one parking lot at a time.

Founded in 2007, Depave is a volunteer-run organization that partners with community groups to transform unnecessary pavement into thriving green spaces. "Asphalt," explains Eric Rosewall, Depave's marketing and site-planning coordinator, "is the biggest barrier to nature's return. Once you get the asphalt out, then the fun stuff can begin."

This is where Depave comes in, providing support to groups with a greening project already in mind. "We really depend on a strong partnership," Rosewall explains. During the proposal review process, Depave members work with the host site to evaluate the space, generate excitement within the community and develop a coherent vision for the project.

Once a project is approved, Rosewall says the next step to going green is getting some green. "We're an entirely grant-funded organization," he explains, with much of the money coming from watershed groups interested in improving soil and stream health by mitigating stormwater pollution.

Projects culminate in a depaving party. At this event, "all the neighbors and partners can come together ... and get involved in helping to reclaim the space," says Rosewall. The weekend before the party, Depave volunteers take a con-

crete saw to the site to cut the asphalt into squares for the partygoers to tear up.

The work isn't done once the blacktop has been cleared, however. "There's typically 4 to 6 inches of gravel under that," Rosewall explains. Once the gravel is hauled away, fresh compost is trucked in. This is the last step in Depave's process, as the volunteers turn the site over to the partner organization for softscaping.

Depaved sites have been transformed into everything from rain gardens to spaces for raised-bed gardening. Several Depave projects have taken place in schoolyards around Portland. By replacing asphalt with grass and native plants, Depave volunteers and partners "make a softer playscape and allow kids to reconnect with nature while they're playing outside," says Rosewall.

In addition to expanding the number of Depave sites in the future (right now, the group averages five to six projects per year), Rosewall says one of the organization's main goals is to inspire people around Portland and across the country to tackle their own depaving projects. To this end, Depave volunteers are trying to smooth the path by providing information and resources, raising money and pushing for reforms to permitting laws.

To learn more about Depave or to learn how to launch your own depaving project, visit the group's website, www.depave.org. —Abby Tripp

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PHOTOS COURTESY ERIC ROSEWALL/DEPAVE