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## High-Tech Hydroponic Farm Transforms Abandoned Bowling Alley

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NEW YORK CITY — On top of an old bowling alley in industrial northern Brooklyn sits an expansive translucent greenhouse. Inside, a bounty of produce thrives under the supervision of a computer-controlled network of sensors, motors and plumbing.



The 15,000-square-foot hydroponic greenhouse facility, called [Gotham Greens](#), is reputedly the first commercial-scale urban operation of its kind in the United States. Thousands of lettuce and basil

seedlings were plopped into a soil-less farming system in May. Since then, three local entrepreneurs say their operation is on track to deliver 100 tons of produce by the one-year mark. While that pales in comparison to about 1.5 million tons of soil-free produce trucked into the city each year, and is far less than the output of nearby [soil rooftop farms](#), the \$2 million startup can't keep up with demand from the city's top chefs and upscale grocery stores.

"On the first harvest day we had so much lettuce we almost didn't know what to do with it all, but now we can't grow it fast enough," said greenhouse director Jennifer Nelkin.

Gotham Greens is already eyeing some of the the city's more than 940 million square feet of rooftop space to expand their high-tech operation.

The hardest task, said co-founder and CEO Viraj Puri, is convincing landlords to entertain the idea of putting a watery business on their rooftops. After that it's a matter of navigating zoning restrictions, building codes and figuring out how to engineer the plumbing.

"You can't bury anything on a roof," Puri said. "It requires some clever technology." □

