

# *Raul Castro recognized for development of Urban Agriculture Movement in Cuba*

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**Photo: Fidel Rendón Matienzo**

Havana, Dec 26 (RHC) Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, founder 35 years ago of the Urban, Suburban and Family Agriculture Movement, was recognized on Monday by the National Group of that movement and that of the province of Las Tunas, through Manuel Marrero Cruz, Cuba's Prime Minister.

In the unit known as *Hortifar*, in the Havana municipality of La Lisa, where the then Minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces called to generalize the experience of growing vegetables in beds enriched with organic matter, the results of the program were evaluated and the best territories and producers were encouraged.

Together with Félix Duarte Ortega, member of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba and head of the Agro-Food Department, and Jorge Luis Tapia Fonseca, deputy prime minister, Marrero Cruz presented the best producers with the corresponding awards.

Santiago de Cuba was the province with the best results, followed by Sancti Spiritus and Havana.

Elizabeth Peña Turruellas, national director of this program, pointed out that since the progress made in 2022 is modest, there is dissatisfaction with what has been achieved since there is untapped potential and reserves in the communities.

Hence her call to work with greater comprehensiveness to increase diversified food production on agroecological bases and sustainable models, which in turn contribute to the achievement of food and nutritional sovereignty.

She stressed that during the year, work has been carried out systematically to strengthen the 12,640 hectares dedicated to the production of vegetables and fresh spices in the modalities of gardens, intensive orchards, semi-protected gardens, technified plots, and rustic farming houses.

In 2022, one million 318 thousand tons of these foods were harvested, 66 thousand 131 thousand more than obtained in 2018, and 280 new gardens were built, but there are still places or lands to be exploited to contribute to local self-sufficiency, a goal not exempt from obstacles, difficulties, and deficiencies.

The year 2023 is called to be a year of actions that will allow the revival of this productive, political movement with an emphasis on obtaining food in backyards and idle land, and checking governmental and business actions to that end.

A significant moment of the meeting was when Néstor Bárbaro Hernández Martínez, general secretary of the National Union of Agricultural, Forestry and Tobacco Workers, announced the agreement of the Secretariat of the Central Workers' Union of Cuba to establish December 27 as the Day of Urban, Suburban and Family Agriculture.

In the conclusions Manuel Marrero asked the National Group to check not only what has been achieved but also what remains to be done in those places that have become micro-dumping sites or barren plots, where there is hardly a tree or where birds are bred, for which reason, alluding to the words of Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, he called to take advantage of every inch of land (Source: ACN).

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