



Square Roots has partnered with URB-E for zero emissions fresh food delivery. | Photo source URB-E

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A PARTNERSHIP DELIVERS SUPER-SUSTAINABLE FRESH FOOD

 FOOD & DRINK

The partnership between an urban farming company and a zero-emission delivery service is delivering fresh produce with low emissions

Spotted: Lowering emissions from last-mile deliveries is an important part of reducing the overall carbon footprint of transportation – one reason why many delivery companies are converting to electric vehicles. Delivery network URB-E has taken this one step further by replacing trucks with small electric vehicles – perfect for navigating heavily congested urban areas. Now, the company has partnered with Brooklyn-based indoor farm Square Roots to develop zero-emissions produce delivery.

Square Roots uses smart technology and software-controlled hydroponic growing systems to grow food indoors with fewer resources. The system not only gives them a 365-day-a-year growing season, but also uses less water than field-based farms – while also taking up less space. The company grows food in vertically stacked, repurposed shipping containers, which reduces the impact on land.

The other advantage of Square Roots’ approach is that it reduces food miles by growing the food within cities themselves. It therefore made sense to ensure that the delivery of this fresh produce was also as sustainable as possible. URB-E uses a containerised system that incorporates insulated cold storage bags that keep produce fresh and make it fast to load and unload.

Tobias Peggs, Co-Founder and CEO at Square Roots, explained that, “Square Roots strategically deploys our indoor farms close to end consumers... resulting in shorter supply chains everywhere—reducing food miles and minimising food waste. By working with URB-E and utilizing their electric-

powered vehicles ... Square Roots can quickly deliver our fresh produce to stores in a way that is better for people and planet, while making good business sense.”

Urban farming is developing rapidly, as smart technology and an excess of vacant buildings combines to create a fertile area for growth. Some projects in this space spotted by Springwise include [AI-powered](#) indoor greenhouses and a [soil-free](#) vertical farm.

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Takeaway:

Partnerships like that between URB-E and Square Roots are likely to be a sign of things to come, as businesses increasingly look for ways to minimise their carbon footprint by focusing on being closer to their customers. One important difference here is that URB-E will be delivering Square Roots’ produce to retail outlets, not individual consumers. While most last-mile delivery focuses on getting packages to the doorstep, this partnership will be delivering food to shops – demonstrating that fresh food can be grown and delivered in a sustainable way in urban areas.