

# MEET A FOOD PIONEER: RON FINLEY

[Ron Finley](#), also known as “the gangsta gardener” is a South Central Los Angeles native. His guerilla gardening (gardening on land that the gardener does not have legal rights to) started on a small curbside plot of grass outside of his LA home. He was later fined by the city for this small garden, refused to pay that fine, and what followed was a warrant for his arrest— for growing food! Ron fought back and eventually won over this dispute.

Ron Finley is a food pioneer because he is a revolutionary voice for food justice in his community and beyond. He believes that community rejuvenation starts in the garden— “To change the community, you have to change the composition of the soil.” Since that small plot he started on city-owned property, Ron has created numerous gardens, including one in an Olympic-sized swimming pool outside of his home, gave his ever-famous [TED Talk](#) presentation, has been featured in a number of articles from outlets such as [Vogue](#) and [New York Times](#), and started the *Ron Finley Project*.



This project aims to “grow [the] seed of urban gangsta gardening into a school of nourishment and change.” Ron plans to build an urban garden called “HQ” in South Central LA. In addition to creating a number of job opportunities, this garden will also serve as a community hub which will provide a place to gather, grow, work, learn and unwind.

“Let the shovel be your weapon of choice,” as Ron says, and gang on fellow gangstas, gang on.

## READ:

- Learn more about his near-arrest, in this [TIME](#) article.
- Check out that [Olympic swimming pool turned garden!](#)

## WATCH:

- Ron Finley’s [TED Talk](#)
- “Gardens build community. [Period.](#)”
- [Gardening, a pandemic, BLM, and humanity.](#)