

Shoprite Act for Change competition names top 10 community food gardens

Nearly 600 community food gardens from across South Africa entered Shoprite's inaugural Act for Change Food Garden Competition, with the retailer announcing the top 10 finalists following a national judging process.



Source: Supplied

The initiative highlights projects improving food security, skills development and income opportunities in local communities.

Launched in October 2025, the competition recognises community gardens that go beyond food production to create social and economic opportunities. The shortlisted projects include rural and township gardens, school initiatives, cooperatives and programmes led by women and youth.

“The judging process considered not only agricultural output but also community reach, sustainability, skills transfer and social impact,” says Sanjeev Raghubir, Chief Sustainability Officer at the Shoprite Group. “The top 10 gardens exemplify these criteria, showing how community-led programmes can ensure access to healthy, nutritious food.”

Top 10 community garden finalists

The finalists, listed alphabetically, represent projects across several provinces:

1. **A Spring of Hope Community Eco Hub, Acornfield (Mpumalanga)** – Located in Bolla Tau near Acornhoek, the project has grown from a single borehole drilled in 2006 into a hub for water security, food systems and enterprise development. Rural women receive training in hydroponics, permaculture and business skills, enabling them to produce and process food for sale. The project has supported more than

100,000 beneficiaries.

2. **ACFS Food Garden, Mogoto Village (Limpopo)** – The garden provides vegetables for local feeding programmes while offering women and youth training in small-scale farming. About 50 people benefit monthly, with the project focusing on building long-term food security and self-sustainability.

3. **Agrinode Garden, Bela-Bela (Limpopo)** – Established by a non-profit focused on food security, the project expanded during the Covid-19 pandemic to support households in need. It now supplies produce around 100 families and provides agricultural training to unemployed youth.

4. **Bafepi Mix Farming and Project, Mahlogo Village (Limpopo)** – The project supplies fresh vegetables locally, trains 25 students in practical farming skills and donates surplus produce to churches & crèches, strengthening food security in the area.

5. **Food Security Project, Gonubie (Eastern Cape)** – Serving the Mzamomhle community, the garden supports 162 women who each cultivate their own plots. Participants receive training in organic farming, water conservation and waste recycling.

6. **Garden of Hope, Krugersdorp (Gauteng)** – Established in Munsieville in 2018, the project feeds more than 350 learners from four schools and supplies produce to 27 households each month while promoting organic and water-wise farming practices.

7. **Ngxanga School Garden, Libode (Eastern Cape)** – The school garden teaches learners to grow vegetables while promoting nutrition and agroecology training. It currently supports 243 learners and five households.

8. **P Agricultural Group (PAG), Soweto (Gauteng)** – What started as an informal project in 2018 has grown into a structured food garden offering agricultural training and hosting regular farmers' markets.

9. **Plenty Green Africa, Tsakane (Gauteng)** – This youth-led project transforms underused urban space into community gardens that provide produce, skills development and volunteering opportunities.

10. **SMU Community Garden, Ga-Rankuwa (Gauteng)** – Based at Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University, the garden provides fresh produce to students in need while offering training in composting, planting and biodiversity management.



Source: Supplied

Next stage of the competition

A panel of judges, including agricultural entrepreneur Masimbonge Vuma, gardening advocate Mosa Seshoene, urban farming pioneer Ncumisa Mkabile and broadcaster Angel Campey, will select six finalists from the top 10 gardens.

The winners will be announced on 10 March at an awards ceremony in Cape Town. The selected projects will share prizes valued at R1m, tailored to help expand their operations and increase their impact.

"Through the Act for Change Food Garden Project, we are reinforcing our long-term commitment to sustainable interventions that help communities thrive," concludes Raghubir.

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