

Christalle Twomey is the owner of Heartbeet Gardenscapes, a CNY business dedicated to helping people grow their own food and herbs. Unlike traditional gardening businesses that focus on ornamental plants, she specializes in edible gardens, teaching clients how they can begin growing their own food in ways that will work for them.

Christalle's journey to entrepreneurship was deeply personal. After spending 17 years in the fashion industry, she was overworked, stressed, and struggling with her health. Long hours triggered her epileptic seizures, leaving her exhausted and questioning her path. She realized she needed a change—one that supported her well-being and aligned with her values. That shift led her back to gardening, a practice she had cherished since childhood.

Growing up in Alabama, Christalle spent weekends helping her grandparents in their garden and on their farm in Florida, where she learned firsthand the value of fresh food. Christalle has fond memories of shelling peas on her grandparents' porch, often eating truly from plant to plate. As an adult, she turned to homegrown food as part of managing her epilepsy. Her personal commitment to gardening soon evolved into a way to help others. Christalle found herself giving gardening advice to others, when a neighbor noticed and encouraged her to turn it into a business. In September of 2023, Christalle took the leap and Heartbeet Gardenscapes was born, and her neighbor became her first client.

Heartbeet Gardenscapes' clients include beginners who need guidance, people adapting their gardening practices to physical limitations, and busy professionals who want fresh food but lack time to grow it themselves. "There's a huge disconnect between people and their food," she explains. "I want to help them bridge that gap—not just by teaching gardening but by showing how fresh ingredients can support their health." Through workshops, personalized guidance, and herbal wellness products, Christalle makes gardening more approachable. Many people feel intimidated by edible gardening and are unsure where to start, especially with herbs. To address this challenge, she offers hands-on learning experiences, such as herb bundle workshops, and collaborates with local businesses to introduce gardening in creative ways.

When Heartbeet Gardenscapes was first launched, the business concept was very broad. Christalle refined her idea and business plan, identified her target market, and connected with a network of supportive women entrepreneurs through the support of WISE Women's Business Center. "In hard times, it's easy to lose sight of why you started. But setbacks are part of growth. Keep going, reach out for support, and be that person for others too."

Christalle loves sharing her passion for fresh food and gardening as a

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business owner. "Starting this business gave me a deeper connection—to myself, to the earth, and to the people around me," she says. When Christalle first arrived in CNY in 2020, she felt isolated, hated the snow, and struggled with her mental health. Through therapy, and building a community here, Christalle has found peace. Her advice for other entrepreneurs? "Be a light in dark places." Beyond her business, Christalle is a Food is Free Ambassador, an initiative that encourages community food sharing. She organizes events like "Warm Souls, Warm Bowls," a community potluck designed to foster connections through shared meals.

Looking ahead, Christalle hopes to establish a community garden and education center, and to continue collaborating with partners to make gardening more accessible. With her deep knowledge and commitment to sharing it, Christalle isn't just growing food—she's cultivating a healthier, more connected community.

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More info at wisecenter.org

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