



Above: Two farmers in Xingwang Village install colorful solar-power bulbs to celebrate the Chinese Year of the Rabbit.

Left: The beautiful skyline of Xingwang Village



The rural cafe plaza in Fangxia Village is situated beside a forest and a vegetable garden. — All photos by Wang Yong

After bidding farewell to the generous couple, I went to the adjacent Xingwang Village, which was also listed as one of the city's latest batch of beautiful villages. Beautiful indeed were these two villages, where vegetable fields are mixed with forests in a typical biodiverse setting.

The two villages epitomize Shanghai's efforts to boost green agriculture through such measures as developing high-quality local vegetable fields.

The further research into the topic gave me a surprise: I found on Friday that local farms supply 80 percent of

green leafy vegetables the city needs. I had imagined that Shanghai would "import" most of its green leafy vegetables from outside.

Although large-scale farms play a vital role in ensuring high self-supply for vegetables, especially green leafy ones, smaller farms are no less important. These smaller fields, scattered around farmers' houses and forested areas, help to nurture regenerative agriculture, which focuses on improving the soil with the organic growth of plants.

In Qingpu District, such smaller vegetable fields conducive to regenerative agriculture

are also prospering. For example, in Songze Village, which is also newly named as one of the city's beautiful villages, a large vegetable field has been spruced up, surrounded by a bamboo grove. In Fangxia Village, which was selected as a city-level beautiful village in 2020, smaller vegetable fields have become an attractive backdrop for an adjacent rural cafe plaza.

Paco Underhill, author of "How We Eat: The Brave New World of Food and Drink," which was published in 2022, said that consumers today increasingly crave for local foods whose growing cycles they can



predict and honor.

In Shanghai, similar things are happening, where more and more beautiful villages have spruced up their communal vegetable fields, going a long way toward cultivating a sustainable future for the planet.

A picturesque vegetable garden in Songze Village, Qingpu District