



Hyphen 55

News from the Office

Office International du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux
association sans but lucratif | spring 2014

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Specialist gardening advice today and tomorrow

is the topic of the Office International's work during the period 2014–2016

Peter Paschke,
 president of Bundesverband Deutscher Gartenfreunde e.V.
 (Central federation of allotment gardens)



In German allotment garden federations and associations, specialist advice is and remains one of our main missions, allowing us to comply with the public utility aspect of the allotment garden movement.

The topic of “gardening advice” is already discussed at length in our legal framework, i.e. the Bundeskleingartengesetz (German federal law on allotment gardens). Article 2 § 1 of the federal law states that:

“An allotment garden association is recognised as a public utility organisation by the region's competent authorities if it is subscribed to the register of associations, undergoes regular management control and if its statutes stipulate that:

1. The association's sole or principal aim is to stimulate the allotment garden movement and to provide technical help to its members;
2. Revenue is specifically used for activities tied to the allotment gardens and
3. If the association is dissolved, its assets are used for activities relating to allotment gardens.”

The legal stipulation of providing gardening advice to members means that the allotment garden associations and federations must create conditions that allow them to meet this requirement.

To implement this mission, all allotment garden associations must have volunteers (experts) with the required technical training. That is why the Bundesverband Deutscher Gartenfreunde e.V. (Central federation of allotment gardens) aimed at training until 2015 a total of 5,000 new experts. Training specialists is a big task, and the regional federations will play a major part.

In fact, the regional federations organise intensive training programmes in order to train experts, particularly around the following topics:

- Environmentally friendly gardens.
- Mulching instead of intensive ploughing.
- Appropriate nutrition for plants.
- Using humus in the garden.
- Correct composting.
- Gardening by rotating plants.
- Growing vegetables that are suitable for the location.
- Growing fruits that are suitable for the location.
- Careful selection of ornamental plants and shrubs that are suitable for the location in order to guarantee a garden respecting nature.
- Using water in a way that is adapted to the needs of the garden.
- Supporting auxiliary organisms through the lay-out of the gardens and growing a variety of plants.
- Getting to know what causes damage.
- Plant protection in the garden.



Conveying these topics comprehensively requires a high number of training days. These can be organised in different ways in the regional federations, and it is worth noting that one of these ways can sometimes be by collaborating with the local gardening academies. In Saxony, the Saxe gardening academy (Sächsische Gartenakademie) in Dresden-Pillnitz provides 150 hours of training, culminating in a final certificate. The regional federations in Brême, Westphalie and Lippe also have their own training centres with the necessary educational gardens to train experts.

How is this vital knowledge then passed onto our member gardeners in the allotment garden associations?

Our specialist experts then use a variety of ways on site, for example:

- Conferences on very different topics.
- Making use of their visits to the gardens by offering specialist advice on site.
- Taking advantage of informal discussions.

- The association's bulletin board: each month gardening advice is here available for member gardeners.
- Information containing the latest news, e.g. about the latest causes of damage and ways to fight against parasites.
- Factsheets presenting specific themes in a brief and clear way (e.g. factsheets from the central allotment garden federation (BDG)).
- Information boards, e.g. in educational and specialist gardens, providing recommendations for selecting species suitable for allotment gardens.
- Series of slides, videos and PowerPoint presentations as visual support to communicate around specific topics.
- Managing educational and thematic gardens in the associations, e.g.
 - Orchards with fruit and berry trees
 - Aromatic gardens
 - Potato gardens
 - Gardens designed for giving specialist gardening advice etc.
- Competitions: competitions are not only a way of providing advice on gardening, but they can also have a very positive effect on sparking activities related to allotment gardens, e.g. a competition on the best allotment in the association.

With regards to "gardening advice", it is important to give our experts up to date advice and information. This means using factsheets from the central allotment garden federation, factsheets from the regional federation on environmentally-friendly gardening, and different specialist information provided by the academy for leisure gardens. For example the Saxe gardening academy has 120 information and factsheets available for experts.

Summary:

The success of our joint activity resides in the ability of all member gardeners in the associations to do gardening in a natural way.



3 good friends left us forever



On 8th October 2014 we received the sad news that **John FARMER** passed away on 5th October 2014.

John FARMER was a very fervent defendant of the International Office and strongly believed in the necessity of a strong international movement. He was convinced that the English allotment federation, as founding member of the International Office, had to play an important role in our movement.

When the English federation left the International Office for a while John FARMER remained member of the International Office with the region he presided until the English federation rejoined our movement.

John FARMER was president of the International Office from 2000 until 2002 and organised with his team the very interesting international congress in York.

We owe him many thanks for his tireless commitment for the national and European allotment gardeners.

We will not forget John FARMER, his commitment, his joviality, his jokes

and his readiness to help.

On 23rd October followed the news that **Jan HERREMAN** passed away on 19th October 2014.

Jan HERREMAN was president of the Belgian respectively Flemish federation.

During his presidency he represented his federation during our general assemblies and took part with important national delegations in our international congresses.

He continuously defended the interests of the Belgian allotment gardeners.

We will not forget his commitment for the allotment garden movement.

On 19th December 2014 we also got the sad news that on 16th December **Theo PEFFER** passed away shortly before his 85th birthday.

Theo PEFFER was secretary general of the Luxembourgish federation from

1973 until 1991. Together with president Metty LOOS he represented the Luxembourgish federation in all the general assemblies and congresses of the International Office.

Theo PEFFER answered over many years the plant and gardening questions of the RTL listeners. His horticultural knowledge was indescribable.

He was a great defendant of the national and international allotment movement. We will not forget his commitment and his never ending support.

Activity report 2014

The executive board has the pleasure to submit the activity report for 2014 to you.

1) Internal activities.

Since the last statutory meeting the executive board met on 27th August, 23rd and 24th November 2014 and is also going to meet on 27th February 2015.

a) Efficiency of the Office activities and representation towards the exterior

Similarly to the congress subject "Focus on allotments" the executive board has continued to deal with this subject and to reflect on how to increase the visibility of the Office. In this context the work on the Office charter, which has internal and external goals, was continued. This charter gives guidelines to the federations on how we should work in the future. The charter was adopted during the general assembly held at the occasion of our international congress in Utrecht. In Hyphen no 54 there was as well the call of the Swedish president Mrs Catharina TARRAS-WAHLBERG to all pull together in the same direction so as to make our national and international allotment movements fit for the future according to the motto: **"Together we are strong"**.

An increased information about the Office could be noticed in the national reviews. This is a very positive evolution because it enables to better sensitize the national allotment gardeners for the necessity of an international cooperation.

We have also actively worked to realise the common activity "Children and Nature". The work is, however, not yet finished. The aim of this activity is to document our activities to sensitize children from allotment families and non-allotment families for nature and to stimulate the federations to under-

take similar activities in the future. This activity was highly appreciated during the presentation meeting of the Office with the new minister for environment in Luxembourg.

At the occasion of the international congress, the federations, honorary guests, the allotment associations we visited and the associations which got diplomas received a calendar presenting the different national federations. This should be a stimulation on how we could better focus internally and externally on the international allotment movement.

On request of some federations the calendar was already printed for 2015 and put at their disposal.

Why should one not replace once the national calendars presenting plants or allotments by an international presentation?

Suggestions for a large publicity for the Office are always welcome.

b) Representation of the Office at the occasion of national ceremonies

This year, the Office was again represented at the occasion of different national events, for example in Germany and Luxembourg by C. ZIJDEVELD and M. WEIRICH.

c) Internet

The homepage was updated at regular intervals. The updating could, however, be optimised if the federations regularly sent news from their associative life. This year this sending of news was relatively unsatisfactory. Regular information from all the countries would be enriching for all and would moreover give to the exterior a positive image of our movement.

The discussion forum created on re-

quest of the delegates is unfortunately not being taken advantage of despite several calls for using this means.

d) Innovative projects

C. ZIJDEVELD has been gathering innovative projects from several federations. A USB stick with those innovative projects has been made and was put at the disposal of the federations at the occasion of the international congress. Not written documents, but visual examples are instruments that can stimulate associations/federations to innovate and realise new projects. It is now the duty of every federation to make these innovative projects known and to encourage their members to do similar projects or realise other new projects. A far reaching campaign for making these innovative projects known has to be organised.

The executive board has decided to issue a brochure of these projects in English, Dutch, German, Finnish, French, Norwegian, and Polish.

It is not sufficient that the authorities and the population know what is done on the sites. Every gardener has to understand that we have to go this way and that we have to open our sites for the population in order to create the necessary acceptance for guarantying the durability of our movement.

At the occasion of the Cost meeting in Riga this USB stick was given to chosen participants in order to positively influence the researchers.

e) Diplomas

This year there have again been many demands for diplomas for an ecological gardening, respectively for innovative projects.

The diplomas were awarded in Utre-

cht. They should have both an internal and an external effect.

Have been honoured for their efforts in the area of an ecological gardening:

- The association „Dijkzicht “ Amsterdam (NL)
- The association „Nieuwe Levenskracht“ Amsterdam (NL)
- The association „Tuinenpark ons Buiten“ Utrecht (NL)

Received a diploma for innovative projects:

- The association „De Koekelt“ VAT Ede (NL)
- The association „De Hoge Weide“ Utrecht (NL)
- The association “Pontnewynydd” Pontnewynydd (GB)
- The association Vallila Helsinki (FI)

The Golden Rose was granted to the town of Utrecht for the efficient support of the Dutch federation and the allotment gardeners in Utrecht.

A constructive cooperation with the authorities is very important not only to safeguard allotments, but also in order to include them as future oriented elements in the town development.

f) European Day of the Garden

This year the European Day of the Garden was celebrated following the international congress, according to a decision taken by the general assembly some years ago.

The aim of the European Day of the Garden is to put both the national and the international movement in the limelight in the country, where the ceremony takes place. It should as well document the value of the allotments for society.

This happened especially with the reception offered by the town of Utrecht at the occasion of the international congress, which was organised on the allotment site “De Hoge Weide”.

A sculpture was unveiled on this site as a souvenir of the European Day of

the Garden 2014 and the 37th international congress.

The Dutch federation now considers celebrating every year a Day of the Garden in order to increase the visibility of the allotment gardens.

g) Hyphen

This year, the Office could publish two further well conceived issues of the Hyphen in cooperation with the firm MAYERHOFER in Austria.

Two new headings were inserted:

a) “Actuality theme”. The idea is to discuss current problems both by the federations and by people not belonging to our movement.

b) An additional heading “Social commitment of the allotment gardeners” was introduced. The aim is to present projects, which highlight the social activities of the allotment gardeners.

The already existing headings were continued.

It is desirable if in future both the federations and external people will help publishing articles with a wide content in the Hyphen in order to continue to improve and to make our magazine, which is published twice a year, even more interesting.

The federations have accordingly to be invited to send more and more articles, not only to make the Hyphen more interesting, but also to increase its European dimension.

h) Support of federations/associations

It could be acknowledged that our Polish allotment friends have won the battle to save the gardens and the federation. The federation, however, will still have to focus in a near future on the practical application of the new law in order to comply with the new legislation. It cannot be excluded that in the future it will have to fight again against attacks based on political or

economic grounds.

It has as well been acknowledged that several federations had problems with the payment of their yearly affiliation fee due to internal difficulties. All these problems could, however, been solved.

i) Cost and other scientific research projects

The Office continues to take part in the Cost project, a scientific study of the allotment garden movement. As already reported before, four areas: ecology, social function, town planning and urban design, are analyzed. An evaluation of our movement and a comparison with the new phenomenon of the “Community Gardens” will be made. Recommendations will be given to the authorities.

W. HOENTJEN, F. FLOHR, H. BONNAVAUD and M. WEIRICH took part in the meeting in Lisbon and a report of this meeting was sent to all the federations with a call to the other federations to take also part in the Cost project.

It was acknowledged that the Finnish federation made efforts in order to take part in the Cost activities. The Finnish representatives in Cost also invited the federation to take part in the Riga meeting. Because the costs for this participation could not be paid by Cost, the federation didn't have the possibility to take part.

At the Cost meeting in Riga the Office was represented by H. BONNAVAUD, W. HEIDEMANN, A. HOBBLINK and M. WEIRICH.

Examples of allotments from Great-Britain, Poland, Italy, Germany, Greece, Estonia and Latvia were presented. The Office representatives had to correct statements made and provide positive input. The discussions with the national researchers were as well very useful.

A written report and the meeting docu-

ments were sent to all the federations. There are other research projects going on as, for example, Snowman and Gesoll unifying Belgian, Dutch and French researchers. A.HOBBELINKS and H. BONNAVAUD represent the allotment gardeners in these workshops. The research Snowman deals above all with subjects as soil quality, pollution, healthy food and health.

2) International Congress

This year the international congress took place in Utrecht from 28th until 30th August. The subject was: "Focus on allotments". The congress took place in a very attractive place with a setting to engender many discussions. The federations' lectures and the films aiming at focussing the authorities', the people's and the media's attention on the national allotments were very interesting. The visits of ten allotment sites enabled the delegates to take many impressions home.

The collected innovative projects were presented and given to the delegates. A use as large as possible has now to be made hereof.

The presence of the allotments in the media at the occasion of the congress was excellent.

Many thanks have to be expressed once more to the Dutch federation for hosting the congress and for their hospitality.

3) International Organisations Council of Europe

The Office took part in the meetings organised for the non-governmental organisations.

In the work group "Human rights and climate change" a position paper was elaborated on this topic. This will be the basis for further activities until the climate conference in Paris end of 2015.

European Union

There are no news concerning a new effective cooperation with the Europe-

an Commission.

It has, however, to be underlined that at the Council of Europe the NGOs in the work group concerning the relationship with the European Union will now try to establish contacts with the NGOs at the European Union in order to start a co-operation. We have to wait and see if this cooperation can facilitate a new cooperation of the Office with the European Commission.

Up to now the participation, respectively the membership in Europa Nostra has not proven that this affiliation will enable us to achieve a better cooperation with the European Union. We have to wait, what the future will bring.

4) Contacts with federations that are not member in the international Office

In spring 2013 the Norwegian association "Egebergløkka Parsellager" asked if it could become member of the International Office.

According to our statutes it is impossible for two federations from the same country to become member of the International Office. Whether a cooperation between the association Egebergløkka Parsellager and the Office can take place is an internal Norwegian matter and has to be solved by these two parties.

This year the Japanese allotment garden federation also sent its annual report on the allotment garden situation in Japan. It has to be acknowledged that the subject concerning technical gardening advice is also very important to the Japanese allotment gardeners and that their efforts well range within the subject, we will be analyzing during the next two years until the congress in Vienna.

The Japanese allotment gardeners took part in the congress in Utrecht. The Office, as well as different national federations have been asked for help by allotment gardeners from Croatia. They also asked about the

conditions for becoming a member of the Office.

The German federation has regular contacts with the Czech allotment gardeners. A possible re-affiliation of the Czech federation to the Office is cautiously considered. Further meetings in Czechia and Austria are planned for 2015.

5) Information to interested people and media presence

This year the Office has again given information concerning allotments to students, respectively the media.

M. WEIRICH, as secretary general of the Office, presented the Office and the international allotment movement during half an hour on the social-cultural radio 100,7 in Luxembourg.

The Office was as well informed that other federations were highly present in the media. For example, in France, the allotment movement was presented during the main evening news on A2.

The English allotment federation, through its affiliated Leeds District Allotment Gardeners Federation, which received medals at the "Chelsea Flower Show" and the "Great Yorkshire Show", gave precious information to interested people and could present the allotments in a very positive focus.

The International Office and the national federations published a common position concerning the new seed regulation proposed by the European Commission.

They participated in the Pesticide Action Week. This participation should be significantly increased in 2015. As well in the future the Office and the federations will have to increase their media presence in order to focus more and more on allotments.

Luxembourg, December 2014
The executive board

Decision protocol of the general statutory assembly

held in Luxembourg on 27th and 28th February, 2015

Were present: the federations of Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Great-Britain, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and Switzerland

Were excused: the federations of Belgium, Denmark, Poland, Sweden and Slovakia

- 1) *The agenda* is completed and adopted with unanimity.
- 2) The *decision protocol* and the report of the general assembly held in Utrecht are adopted with unanimity.
- 3) The *activity report* is adopted with unanimity.
- 4) The *Internet forum* does not yet work. Several federations will get new passwords. The aim of the forum is to give the federations a space where they can discuss and quickly solve problems without formalities and confidentiality problems.
- 5) Every two weeks a *new article* is published on our homepage under the heading "News". Spontaneous contributions are highly welcome. The federations of Austria, France, Germany, Great-Britain, Luxembourg and Switzerland will send information. The national webmasters should be instructed to send interesting articles that will be put online on their national homepage or will be published in their national magazine to the Office.
- 6) *The delegates* receive information on the situation in Belgium, Denmark, Poland, Slovakia and Sweden, as far as available.
- 7) The *Norwegian delegate* informs on the situation in Norway.
- 8) The delegates get informed on the programme and the *inscription fees* (+/- 700 €) for the study session in Luxembourg.
- 9) The contents of *the Hyphens no 56 and 57* are completed.
- 10) On basis of the collected *innovative projects* a draft layout for a brochure will be made in Austria. The brochure should have +/- 32 pages. The federations, from which the Office has not yet received innovative projects, for example Norway and Denmark can still (but urgently) send in a project(s). The Norwegian federation will send in a project (composting with worms). The Danish federation should be contacted.
- 11) Examples from 11 federations were received for our *brochure on children and nature*. The German federation will make the layout. As soon as the draft layout will be ready, the Luxembourgish resort ministers will be contacted for a foreword. An adequate title is still missing.
- 12) It is unanimously decided that the Office will take part in the "*campaign without pesticides*" in Luxembourg as well as in the countries, where the national federations wish it to be so. Calls to all allotment and home gardeners as well as the study session are the two Office activities to be made during the campaign 2015. The call should be put online on the Office and the national homepages on 20th March 2015. The delegates thank the Luxembourg campaign coordinator for putting the texts of the plant cards at the Office's disposal. The Office will send the templates with the Office logo to the federations so that they can print the cards. The cards cannot be distributed before 20th March 2015. The Office will ask the coordinator not only to get the PDF document, but also a Word document, which will make the translations easier (for example into English and Dutch). The Luxembourgish coordinator will receive these translations made by the federations.
- 13) The delegates get information concerning *the scientific studies* in which the Office, respectively the French and Dutch federations are represented.
- 14) *P. PASCHKE* informs on the progress of the preparations for the IGA 2017. The Dutch federation has contacted the Danish federation in order to find out if they are planning to make a presentation on the Danish allotments. There is still no answer. The federation should be contacted once more. It might be possible that an Austrian director will make a film on the European allotment movement for 2016. The Office should

- facilitate the contacts if necessary.
- 15) The federations put at the disposal of the Office the missing pictures for the calendar. The Norwegian federation will send a recipe.
- 16) *The treasurer J. KIEFFER presents the financial report.*
It is decided to change the name of the position "Reserve: Miscellaneous" into "Reserve for future not yet planned projects".
- 17) *The auditors inform* that they have found no mistake. They ask the delegates to adopt the financial report and to grant discharge to the executive board.
- 18) The general assembly adopts *the financial report for 2014* with unanimity and grants discharge to the executive board with unanimity.
- 19) *The draft budget for 2015* is adopted with unanimity. The expense for the interpretation in Utrecht has to be included in order to pay off the Dutch deficit.
- 20) *The draft budget for the solidarity fund for 2015* is adopted with unanimity. The aim and purpose of the solidarity fund are explained once more.
- 21) It is decided with unanimity to give the *diploma* for an ecological gardening to the association Sonnenweelde, The Hague (NL) and to the association Vlijpark Dordrecht (NL), the associations KGV im Albgrün, Karlsruhe (D) and KGV Dahlie, Rostock (D).
The diploma for social activities will be given to the associations KGV Licht-Luft, Kaiserlautern, (D) and KGV Ulmenweg, Merseburg (D).
The diploma for innovative projects will be given to the associations KGV Wühlmäuse 2000 Hamburg and KGV Südhang, Zwickau (D).
If the Office will get the written requests for the association Marsannay (F) and Merl (L) and the pesticide free association in Norway, they will get the diploma for an ecological gardening.
- 22) P. LAITILA is nominated as *substitute accountant* to finish the mandate of L. OSCARSON. (2018)
- 23) The written report concerning the cooperation with *international organizations* was sent to all the national federations and M. WEIRICH gives the additional requested explanations.
It is decided to transmit the text worked out by the INGOs on "climate change and human rights" to the Luxembourgish minister of environment protection as Luxembourg will be presiding the European Union at the occasion of the climate summit in Paris.
The German, English and possibly French federations will send projects dealing with the intercultural dialogue, so that the Office can give them to the Council of Europe within its campaign "A living together in the diversity".
- 24) The *subject concerning home gardeners* was discussed without finding an adequate solution.
The problem concerning allotment gardens and community gardens was discussed without finding a consensus. The delegates could not agree on a definition of the existing forms of Urban Gardening.
- 25) The subject concerning the necessity to convince the individual allotment gardener of the importance of making projects in his association is put on the agenda of a next meeting.
- 26) The *next general assembly* will be held in Luxembourg on 27th August, 2015 at 5.15 p.m.

The *next statutory general assembly* will be held in the City Hotel in Luxembourg on 4th and 5th March, 2016.

The allotment garden site “Nieuwe Levenskracht” has received the diploma for an ecological gardening



“Nieuwe Levenskracht” is a member of the Amsterdam Allotment Federation. The garden complex was founded in 1933 and has recently celebrated its 80th anniversary.

The management team of “Nieuwe Levenskracht” takes an active approach in promoting ecological gardening amongst the gardeners, and has done so for fifteen years. This resulted in 35 percent of the park members practicing an ecological gardening. The park was awarded the three-dots National Quality Mark for Ecological Gardening thirteen years ago and this status was prolonged year after year.

Seven years ago the attempts to strengthen the ecological significance of the garden park for the urban area of Amsterdam were renewed, resulting in a four-level approach:

- 1) Identifying and developing the existing ecological values of the garden park.
- 2) Seeking cooperation with third parties.
- 3) Enhancing ecological consciousness and the experience of the natural world with both gardeners and visitors from surrounding urban areas.
- 4) Developing education on topics concerning nature and ecological gardening.

Implementing these policies effectively improved the ecological status of the garden park and they will continue to do so in the future. The garden park was granted a four-star National Quality Mark, the highest achievable, in 2013 as a direct result of these improvements.

A summary of the most important achievements:

The expansion of Amsterdam since the 1930's has resulted in a unique lay out of the city. Newly developed urban areas stretch like fingers of a hand into the surrounding region with broad green wedges between them. With the ongoing urbanization the vitality of these green wedges was endangered. In order to integrate the isolated green areas into a network, a “Main Ecological Structure” was developed at the start of this century. Waterways and drainage canals along which animals can migrate interconnect the green areas and play a vital role in the integration. This set of waterways is called the “ecolint”.

Garden park “Nieuwe Levenskracht” is located in one of the green wedges, close to a main ecological zone of migration. If our garden park could improve its function as an ecological stepping stone along the migration route, it would contribute to the integration of the green zones. This would in its turn be beneficial to the ecological structure surrounding Amsterdam. In 2006 a plan was drawn up to adjust the banks of the main drainage canal



which runs through the park and the neighbouring sporting grounds. Both the water control board (Hoogheemraadschap Gooi- en Vechtstreek) and the province of Noord-Holland recognized its relevance and contributed financially to its execution. A number of educational and informational meetings were held for the park members in order to raise enthusiasm for the project. To encourage the feeling of shared responsibility it was decided that an important part of the project was to be executed by the gardeners themselves.

A zone of gradual transition between the water of the drainage canal and the embankment was established by the creation of wetland areas; a modification beneficial to many groups of animal species such as snakes (grass snake), amphibians, birds and dragonflies.

Next to the wetland areas an array of other biotopes was realized.

A wall of turf was built as habitat to all kinds of insects, small animals and specific plants. And furthermore an extended lime-mortar insect-reptile-wall was erected. Dead hedges were placed on several locations providing living space for all sorts of small animals and to facilitate new generations of grass snakes. A brooding heap was assembled. Currently a toad pool is in the last phase of construction. Also a number of insect hotels were placed throughout the park area.

A wide variety of indigenous plants was planted. As time passed, new species also appeared spontaneously. At the last count more than 185 species were listed, varying from common to endangered species. A fixed group of volunteers is responsible for the maintenance of these ecological zones.

During the preparation and execution phase of the project there was

an elaborate cooperation with the management of the adjacent sporting grounds. This organisation has taken important steps in improving the ecological status of the area under its control. Another result of the cooperation was that several walking-routes were laid out across the garden park and the sporting grounds. In a joint effort with the municipality of Amsterdam numerous educational signs were developed which were placed along these walking-routes. The signs give in a colour and playful way information about the nature and animal life on the sporting grounds and the garden park. On a regular basis presentations are given to park members and the neighbourhood on topics concerning the ecological projects.

To assure continuity of the current policy and sustained commitment to the development of ecological values, the park management, the eco zone-volunteers and the park maintenance group have drawn up plans for the coming years formulating new projects and improvements to the embedding of the garden park in the "Main Ecological Structure" of Amsterdam.

The association “Tuinenpark ons Buiten” from Utrecht has received the diploma for an ecological gardening



The association “Tuinenpark Ons Buiten” in Utrecht was founded in 1928 and has its present leisure garden site (3.5 hectares, 100 gardens, 30 small vegetable gardens and an animal garden) since 1958.

Since the nineties the “Tuinenpark Ons Buiten” started with a more ecological management of their garden site. In 2004 and 2009 the association was rewarded with the Dutch quality mark for ecological management of their site with 3 stars. The next years the association worked hard to further improve the ecological management and in 2009 they were awarded with the maximum of 4 stars.

The criteria:

Thirteen years ago the AVVN has de-

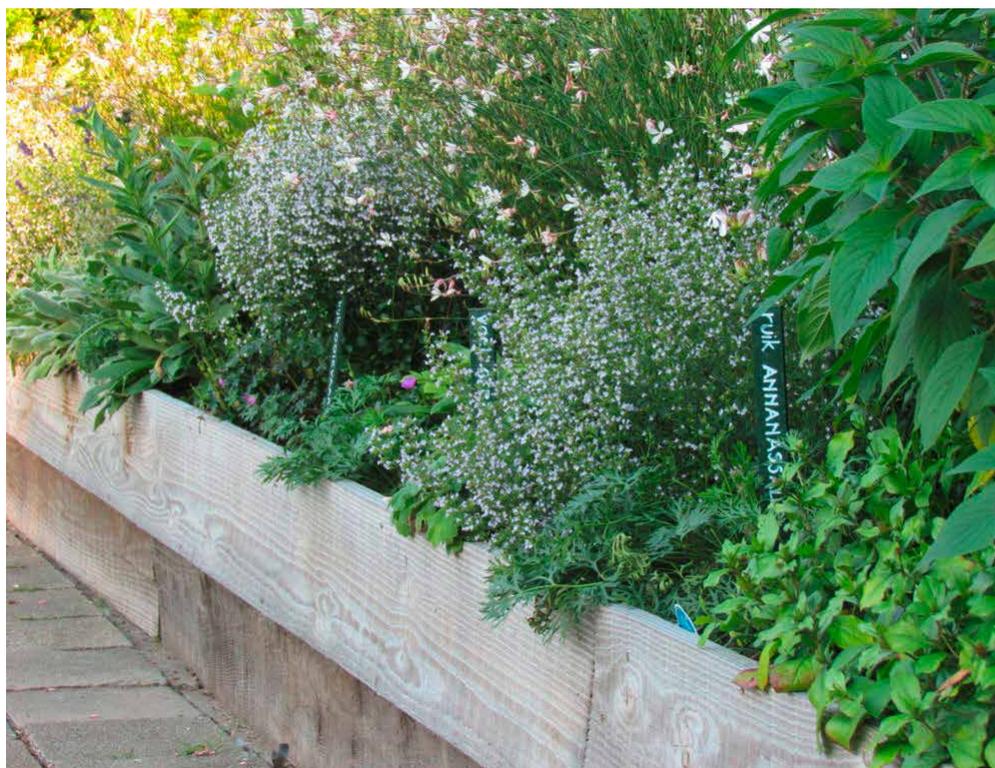
veloped together with several nature conservation organizations a national quality mark for associations, which meet strict criteria on ecological gardening. Associations that meet the criteria can get a quality mark with one, two, three or four stars (best).

“Tuinenpark Ons Buiten” meets these strict criteria of the AVVN and is one of the few leisure garden sites in The Netherlands, which achieved the maximum of four stars. “Tuinenpark Ons Buiten” has signed a contract with the AVVN in which they declare they will comply with the strict rules.

The gardening at “Tuinenpark Ons Buiten” is also, in accordance with the Office brochure, “an ecological approach to allotment cultivation”.

Special projects on ecological gardening developed by “Tuinenpark Ons Buiten” are:

- several workshops for garden members and interested people from the nearby neighbourhood about ecological gardening and related subjects,
- almost all gardeners are practicing nature conservation in their own gardens which results in a comprehensive biodiversity,
- “Tuinenpark Ons Buiten” is very eager to help volunteers from the neighbourhood who share in the policy of nature conservation,
- initiator of an ecological neighbourhood vegetable garden outside the gate for residents and provision of compost and tools,
- beautiful petting zoo surrounded by small allotments in an ecological scenery,
- information signs with explanation on ecological projects, also aiming to welcome and communicate with visitors in the park,
- the community of “Tuinenpark Ons Buiten” made a list of special trees in and around the gardens and after that the members constituted a fund in order to maintain the trees,
- dry stone walling, garden for butterflies, special pool for several animals, fences and heaps of branches and twigs, a large insect hotel, special hives for solitary bees,
- nature education route, route of special trees with name signs,
- sensory garden and a herb garden which are also accessible to disa-



- bled persons and wheelchair users,
- educational activities with childcare, primary school and the neighbourhood,
- supervising several excursions for garden parks,
- bee hives,
- wild flowers and insects garden,
- digital newsletter for the garden members and a nice website onsbuitenutrecht.nl,
- some benches on the garden site are made of recycled materials,
- special ecological management of the site for example phased mowing,
- lots of nesting facilities for insects and birds.

Since 2006 the association has implemented the recommendations of the research report „The added value of garden parks“ where nature conservation is an integral important part. Each month the garden members are informed on ecological subjects through the magazine “Nieuwsflits”. The percentage of gardeners that effectively apply the criteria of natural gardening is approximately 95%.



The allotment garden site “Park Groenewoud” in Utrecht, member of the allotment association “De Hoge Weide” has received the diploma for innovative projects.

The garden site is in many ways unique in The Netherlands.

A brief history:

“De Hoge Weide” was founded in 1954 with the aim of providing its members with soil for the use of vegetable or ornamental gardens or a combination of both types. Originally the garden site was located on the outskirts of Utrecht. In 2003 the garden site had to be relocated because the main motorway between Amsterdam – Utrecht and the south of The Netherlands was moved and the original garden site disappeared under the asphalt.

This did not mean the end of “De Hoge Weide”. Instead of relocating the garden site to the new outskirts of the city, the council of Utrecht decided to create a new garden site on one of the most expensive building locations in The Netherlands, closer to the city centre.

The new garden site was planned by a landscape architect and the design had to combine work and leisure. It became a unique park on a unique location. The garden site is planned around eight small office buildings. The offices are mainly service industries like ICT, financial services, ad-



vocacy etc. “Park Groenewoud” is a beautiful park for gardeners as well as for the people that work in the surrounding buildings and the residents of the districts nearby. The park is open from sunrise to sunset.

However, the unique location and design is not all that makes this garden site an example for the rest of The Netherlands. The allotment association “De Hoge Weide” decided to

bring several special elements into the garden site and did/does this all with volunteers:

Special projects:

“De Hoge Weide” created several thematic and/or educational gardens and other special elements:

- 1) Insect garden. A sea of flowering plants all spring, summer and autumn through and food for insects in general and butterflies in spe-



cial all year through. A lust for the human eye.

- 2) Compost garden. Here the association composts its own green and shows gardeners how to compost themselves. The compost garden also offers shelter and nesting possibilities for animals.
- 3) Sheep garden. The sheep are kept for a grazing project. They graze part of the edges of the garden park.
- 4) Bird bush. Special trees and shrubs for birds are planted in the birds' bush. An information panel provides visitors with the necessary information.
- 5) Food bank garden. In this garden members of "De Hoge Weide" on a voluntary base grow vegetables for the food bank. During the season every week the food bank collects the vegetables and distributes them under registered poor families.
- 6) Bee garden. On a hidden spot of the garden site a bee keeper has several bee hives.
- 7) Prairie garden. The prairie garden shows special plants that can be found on prairies and rocky surfaces. It is beautiful all year through, but especially when in flower.
- 8) Toad pool. A special pool for toads and other amphibians is

built in the central field near the association building. In its design the educational function was also taken into account, as visitors can actually cross the pool and can get and feel really close to it.

- 9) Insects wall. A special wall which offers shelter and nesting possibilities for solitary insects. The wall is located next to one of the main paths and visitors can observe the insects from nearby.



The Allotment site Vallila in Helsinki has received the diploma for innovative projects

Allotment Museum in
Vallila Allotment Gardens
(Helsinki, Finland)

In 1977 the site's last cottage still in its original condition became available



In the middle of the Vallila allotment gardens, at Omenapolku 93 (93, Apple Road), there is a tiny little cottage, of appr. 10 m², dating back to the 1930s. It is still in its original condition. The cottage was designed by two distinguished architects, Brunila and Tuukkanen, in 1932.

The garden was recently restored to the condition originally designed by Mrs. Elizabeth Koch, a professional gardener and pioneering allotment gardening promoter in Finland. Her original planting scheme is still implemented on three plots in the Vallila Allotment Gardens which were set up in 1931.

and the Board of the Association decided to buy it. The cottage museum is owned and run by the Vallila Allotment Association.

As far as their living conditions were concerned the working class met with big challenges brought along by industrialization and urbanization of the early 20th century. International Labour Organization (ILO) recommended workers to spend their leisure in health promoting and meaningful activities like cultivating allotments.

Helsinki City Council advised: "The purpose of allotment gardens is to provide families with limited means



with a possibility to lease at a reasonable cost a small gardening plot where the members of the family are able to spend their vacation time." The idea was not only to engage families in toiling the land and spending their leisure effectively, but in enjoying gardening and growing decorative plants as well. It was important to have time for socializing and taking it easy in the shade of lilacs (*Syringa vulgaris*) growing next to the cottage.

For 30 years the cottage museum was dormant. In the summers of 2009 and 2010 the cottage and its garden were refurbished by collective efforts of Vallila allotment gardeners. All the items donated by local allotment gardeners date back to the 1930s and their originality was verified and approved by the Helsinki City Museum. Furthermore, the items were photographed and provided with an identification number. They will be catalogued according to the instructions of the Helsinki City Museum. The interior design of the cottage was planned under the supervision of researchers of the museum, too.

Elisabeth Koch stressed the impor-

tance of variety. In her days it was usual to grow crops like potatoes, Swedish turnips (*Brassica napobrassica*), carrots, root beets, sugarbeets, turnips (*Brassica rapa*), various kinds of cabbages, pumpkins, onions as well as beans, peas, chicory (*Cichorium*) and dill. It was obligatory to have at least one apple tree and berry bushes on the plot. Rhubarb and peppermint were grown at the edges of the plot. Popular decorative plants of the time included as follows: globeflower (*Trollius hybridus*), primrose (*Primula denticulate*), columbine (*Aquilegia caerulea*), peony (*Paeonia lactiflora-hybridus*), tiger lily (*Lilium lancifolium*), larkspur (*Delphinium hybridum*), rose (*Rosa pimpinellifolia*), mallow (*Malva moschata*), phlox (*Phlox paniculata*) cowslip (*Primula elatior*) and carnation (*Dianthus plumarius*). Nowadays Vallila allotment gardeners work together on a voluntary basis growing both above mentioned decorative plants and vegetables. Meals are then prepared and enjoyed together.

Vallila Museum Cottage is open every Sunday, summer only, 13.00 – 15.00. It is possible to book a guided tour.

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Brief overview on development and changing popularity trends of allotment gardens in Latvian cities.

Lauma Līdaka, architect, territorial planner at Riga City Council



Latvia is one of the three Baltic States.

The typical climate for Latvia is mild and it is possible to yield only one harvest per year - food supply for winter must be prepared during the warm period of the year.

Inhabitants of the lands of the current territory of Latvia traditionally have been an agrarian nation. But the geographical location on the crossroads between Russia and Europe and the entrance to sea served as a catalyst for rapid growth of cities in the beginning of the 20th century. Both in Eu-

rope and in Latvia the origins of the urban allotment movement is marked by the beginning of urbanisation.

The first written testimony of the establishment of allotment gardens dates back to the year 1907 when the first allotment gardens were created in Riga.

The tendencies of garden popularity have been closely linked with the social and economic situation in the country. The first allotment gardens were created to provide better food for the growing working class. Later other

reasons came up - the importance of good quality food, vitamins and fibre as part of a healthy diet. There was a belief that working in a garden will also have a positive effect on the workers' moral.

During the period of both world wars gardens were created to support citizens with food. But the period of Latvia's independence in between both wars was another situation. As the economy of Latvia boomed because of agriculture, peasant lifestyle became a national symbol and urban allotments served as an instrument to promote living and working with land in the urban environment.

Yet most of the territories were created in Soviet times, most of them – in the 60's and 70's. As shops were empty people used gardens to sustain living. As well the garden gave a feeling of private property – something that no one living in small apartments in Soviet Union could dream about.

But then – what is an allotment garden in Latvia? With some exceptions those are land plots of 200-600 m² grouped on a larger territory that can have from 10 until some hundreds of garden plots. The land is owned by a municipality or the state and one can rent but not buy an allotment garden. Plots are rented by the municipality or through garden cooperatives to the gardener.



There isn't a general law at national level that regulates the development and maintenance of urban allotment gardens in Latvia. It is the municipality's task to create its own rules on handling the garden territories.



One can find an allotment garden site in almost all the cities in Latvia. A survey made in the 15 largest cities of Latvia shows that the situation in all of them is similar: the size of one plot (200-600m²), the proportion of territory that allotments cover in the city (1,1% - 1,9%), the popularity trend (stable). In most of the cities allotment gardens are of temporary use and if the territory they cover, according to the land use plan, are meant for something else. When there will be a demand for a new use. The gardeners will have to move to give space for housing, industry or parks.

Municipalities share the same problems— burglaries, degraded look and as well antisocial behaviour that can be spotted in some gardens. As the largest proportion of the gardeners are pensioners or people with low income, the price of rent is also an issue, even if it rarely exceeds some Euros per year.

The Case of the City of Riga

Riga is the capital of Latvia. Almost one third of the country's population lives in Riga. Therefore the city with its 302 km² area and almost 700,000 in-

habitants is the 3rd largest city around the Baltic Sea.

Riga was founded in 1201. As in many medieval cities the gardens have been there almost always. Located just behind the fortification wall, they were used to produce food for the citizens of Riga.

When initiating the creation of the first allotment gardens in 1907 the German Ernest von Roth claimed that they will be a remedy against the popularity wave of socialism, alcoholism and bad behaviour. After the mayor's Georg Armisted order the project of site was made and building rules assigned. Gardens were leased for one or three years.

After WW1 a lot of people were left unemployed and the garden was a way on how to sustain at least food. When economic stability was regained a lot of articles that promoted the activity in urban areas were published in mass media. An article in a magazine reveals:

„The City council is not trying to get a lot of profit from the gardens, because they believe that they create a beautiful surrounding for our grey metropolis. It also teaches the inhabitants that not only the machinery that they work with on daily bases is the richness of our country. It is mother earth that creates the wealth of it.”

There was a strong control carried out and competitions organised to encourage maintenance of garden plots. The gardens were so popular that there was a belief „Riga is the green metropolis not only thanks to its parks but even more thanks to its allotment gardens”.

After WW2 the number of gardens again grew several times. During the Soviet time free land in the city was divided in small plots and allocated for gardens giving the first hand for soldiers and war veterans. Not all



happened on legal basis. Because of harsh conditions a lot of people created gardens illegally on free land. In total during Soviet time the number of family gardens grew 4 times (table nr.1) They were also used for recreation. After regaining independence the number of gardens fell rapidly. Lands were given back to their previous owners as a consequence of denationalisation, included in a land reserve fund or planned for development. The first ones to be demolished were gardens in the city centre, for ex-

ample the site of the first allotments of Riga, in Skanste.

This event marked the beginning of society's activism regarding the significance of allotments in Riga. Even though the group of gardeners lead by Ms Rita Bebre were not able to retain gardens in Skanste, they achieved that allotment gardens were defined as a long-term temporary use and were included in the Development plan of Riga (1995-2005) as part of the green territories. In the current De-

velopment plan of Riga (2006-2018) four categories of gardens are divided according their status and lease term (Picture Nr.1).

Slowly gardens are being pushed out of the city centre. The allotments in Skanste were closed in 2002 to give space for the extension of the city centre, the site in Torņakalns in 2010 to host the new campus of the University of Latvia. In 2011 the northern part of the Lucavsala site was cleared. Nowadays a very popular public park is built there. Some middle term gardens have been closed to give space for the Port extension.

There are protests but they never reach the limit that can change the situation. It is because gardens are a value for people who use them. For those who don't use them, the image of the gardens is that of a degraded territory: sad looking, overgrown spaces with strange buildings and fencing made from anything that has been at hand, inhabited by homeless people and criminals.

There is a chain reaction that facilitates the current state of the allotment gardens. The short lease term makes gardeners feel insecure about the future and they choose either to abandon the garden or to use cheap materials to avoid losses if renting is interrupted. As gardens are abandoned, empty plots are left. Homeless people move in often bringing criminal activities. Burglaries and vandalism push enthusiastic gardeners to leave. This tendency makes the municipalities think that this activity is not popular, it lowers the quality of the cities' space and serves as a hotbed of crime and they decide to close the sites down. And the loop starts again. Do we need gardens in Riga? According to the Central Statistical Bureau only 5.5% of the inhabitants in Riga live in private or twin houses. From the 94.5% that live in apartments, around 70% of them live in multi-storey apartment houses. It means that

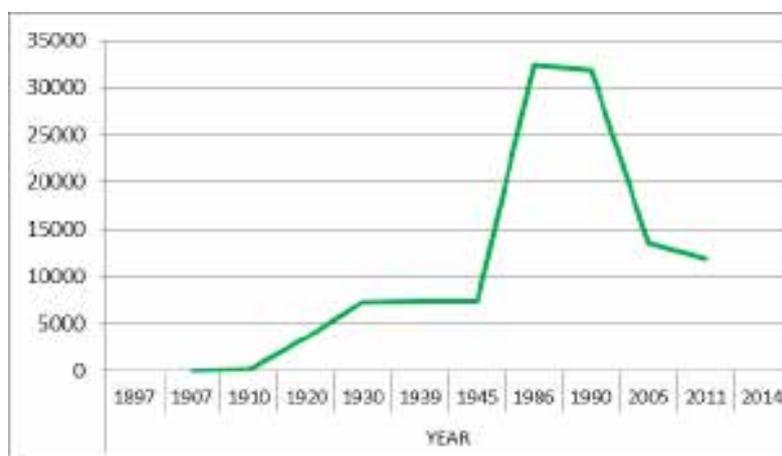


Tabelle 1: Die Anzahl der Kleingärten in Riga



Bild 1: Status der Kleingartenanlagen nach Maßgabe des Entwicklungsplans von Riga 2006.-2018.



most of the people in Riga don't have a possibility to have a closer contact with soil and green spaces except in a park or forest.

By evaluating the possibilities to protect the natural structure and to sustain the ecological, recreational and social functions, Riga needs to evaluate the possibility to use allotment gardens as a means to achieve the goals. If the territories are created and based on a well thought management policy it would be possible to achieve both – widening the social function spectrum in built up areas and expanding the accessibility to public water spaces and green areas in the city. It would allow to achieve the goals of the neighbourhood policy, that describes the need to provide diverse functions in each of Riga's 58 neighbourhoods.

As the new territorial plan for the period after 2018 is in working progress now, it is possible to start already today.

The allotment garden movement in South Korea: The federation of allotment gardeners in Baden-Württemberg supports this development

Alfred Lüthin, President of the allotment garden federation of Baden-Württemberg e. V.



South Korea is among the countries in the Asian region in which the allotment garden movement is very popular. The demand to get a small garden for leisure is very important, especially among the population of the big cities. Since 2003 the federation of allotment gardeners in Baden-Württemberg has been supporting the development of an allotment garden movement in South Korea. At that occasion a delegation of South Korean government employees under the leadership of

the substitute minister for agriculture visited the allotment gardeners in Karlsruhe. Their aim was to get to know the German allotment garden movement and to get hold of experiences for the development of an allotment garden movement in Korea. Following this visit the federation of allotment gardeners in Baden-Württemberg has regularly received the visit of Korean delegations twice or three times a year, who wanted to deepen their knowledge and get information

on the German allotment movement. They wanted to consider a possible practical application of these ideas.

In November 2005, following an invitation of the minister of agriculture of Korea, Alfred Lüthin, president of the allotment garden federation of Baden-Württemberg, and Ferdinand Kilius, scientific garden adviser of the federation, went to South Korea in order to present the German allotment garden movement and particularly the one in Karlsruhe. Representatives from Russia and Switzerland were also present and shared information on the allotment or garden movement in their countries. In this way the South Korean experts had a survey of the advantages and disadvantages of the different allotment garden concepts.

The concept from Karlsruhe was convincing

Approximately 500 representatives from different ministries, authorities and important federations, among others the agricultural federation and the federation of women farmers, watched this presentation. Finally the decision was taken to use the concept presented by the representatives from Karlsruhe, taking into consideration the typical situation of Korea and the regional differences.

Because there are no free spaces in the big cities and in their direct neighbourhood the sites were created further away from the cities. The necessary grounds to create allotment gardens were received in different ways: either the local authorities put the grounds directly at disposal or farmers transformed part of their grounds into allotment plots. During the week the local people take care of the gardens and sometimes get paid for it. During the weekends the people having rented the gardens come from the towns to stay in their gardens.

A year later the support of the allotment federation from Baden-Wurt-



temberg was again requested. Within the framework of a week long roundtrip through South Korea the allotment gardeners informed on the allotment garden movement: every day they held two lectures on the development, the structure, the administration, as well as on other relevant subjects for the allotment movement. During this visit as well as at the occasion of all other discussions Dr Hwang Suk-Jung was our interpreter. He was

at the service of the South Korean delegation in Germany and accompanied the German participants on their journeys in Korea. Dr Hwang studied agriculture and horticulture at the university of Geisenheim. In South Korea he was director of the State institute of research for green land economics. After an intensive exchange of information and opinions the first prototype of an allotment garden site was finally accomplished in South Korea in 2007.

An intensive exchange of information

During the next years the interest of the Korean people for the German allotment garden movement was still very important. From 2007 until 2010 delegations accompanied by TV teams regularly visited the allotments in Karlsruhe and gathered information on the German and especially the Karlsruhe allotment garden movement.

In April 2010 a German delegation under the experienced leadership of Alfred Lüthlin and Ferdinand Kilius followed again an invitation of the South Korean ministry of agriculture and of the important agriculture university in Kangwon. Among others the delegation visited a Citrus research institute. This agricultural experimental institution is organisator and administrator of a planned allotment garden site to be shortly created on the Jeju Island. The employees of the research institute follow the development of the allotment garden movement in Germany with great interest and are highly interested in ecological agriculture. Consequently, it was evident that all the leading people of the Citrus research institute were present at our lectures.

Different structures and conditions

A further visit was reserved to a new allotment garden complex situated forty kilometres away from Chuncheon. This is the third site in South Korea,

but the first one where allotment sheds are constructed according to the traditional South Korean style. Their ground surface has twenty-four square meters, but in Chuncheon all the allotment sheds are two storied. The reason thereof is that contrary to what happens in Germany the sites that have been created up to now are situated at a distance between forty and eighty kilometres away from the towns. Therefore, the allotment garden users can only come to visit their gardens during the weekend and will stay there overnight. During the week the people from the neighbouring villages take care of the garden and get paid for it.

Also in other aspects the expending South Korean allotment garden movement is different from ours. The sites are given ready for occupation to the tenant, that means also with the garden shed. Because of the important demand and the current very low offer the rent is high: approximately 4,000 € have to be paid per year for a garden on a site near Chuncheon. The lease contracts are also concluded only for one year, even if the possibility for a continuation exists. Despite this, there are hundreds of people who wish to get an allotment. Contrary to Germany no association in the classical sense of the word has yet been founded. The allotment garden grounds are directly rented to the interested gardener by the owners which can be the town or private people. Because people have good and high salaries also "simple employees" can effort to rent a plot.

Square-shaped allotment gardens of the Fontaine d'Ouche district in Dijon



Project

50 square-shaped allotment gardens integrated into the outer spaces of the Community Centre. This is an ongoing project.

Project summary

1. Entertain a public space which hasn't been qualified yet
2. Create conviviality and social links in a populous area
3. Use the allotment gardens to act for socially disabled people
4. Raise people's awareness about biodiversity and nature in the city.

The context

The Fontaine d'Ouche area was built in 1967 upon the hills where you could find the last vineyards of Dijon, near Lake Kir. This social housing area has 10,300 inhabitants, living in 4,500 dwellings, half of them consist of social housing. A major program of urban renewal is on its way, in order to open up the area and to improve the lives of the local people.

The Community Centre is a major place of entertaining and activities for the people. It is also a resource and information centre.

The request for allotment plots came from the expressed need to find an appropriate use for the green space around the Community Centre.

The National Federation for Allotment Gardens was called, so that its research department made a site survey, a project to create the allotments and the management structure for them.

This expertise showed the following facts:

- a 4,100 sqm surface of which 600 sqm could be devoted to build allotments,
- the future allotment site has strengths but also has constraints.

Some strengths...

- A nice place to garden and have a walk: the future gardens will be near the Canal de Bourgogne, which will be visible from the plots;
- The site will be very close to the blocks where the future gardeners live; access to the gardens will be by foot;
- This versatile place promotes exchanges between the different users: gardeners and youth in the Community Centre;
- An area which is lightly fenced;
- An enclosed space which can be used as storage for gardening equipment;
- A group of bushes and a cedar tree near the storage will make a transition between the gardens and the

Community Centre;

- High brightness in the central part of the land, after 3 poplars have been chopped down
- The recovery of rainwater from the storage roof will be possible.

But some constraints...

- The small area of the land will only accommodate very small plots to meet the demand from local residents;
- The irregular geometric shape of the land;
- The shadow of some large plants (cedar trees, poplars...)
- A levelling will be necessary to get a flat, even field (it's currently highly uneven)
- The presence of an embankment



near the Community Center building

- The presence of a gap to the north and a 1 meter deep underground network.

The project

- 50 plots arranged in squares of 2,25 sqm and elevated 20 or 30cm. Those very tiny plots will allow satisfying many local residents, due to the surface of the land. Obviously the food aspect is not the main goal in this type of project, but the contribution in terms of usability and social links. Those plots are also well adapted for disabled persons and for educational activities that require a large space.
- An associative area composed of a group of bushes at the entrance of the garden site, an area with lawn for various activities (educational pond, suitable plots, rest and exchange area). A small tree, replacing the linden trees, adorns this central area and provides some shadow.
- The main paths made of stabilized material allow moving and contemplating the garden plots.

- The fairways, 0,60 meters wide, are covered with lawn or wood chips.
- Gardening equipment is stored into drawers built into the shed.
- Bird shelters and composters make the installation complete.

Plots will be assigned either to local associations for their activities or to families. Each family will have 3 or 4 garden squares to be used as gardens.

An association will be created and attached to the FNJFC.

The actors

- The Fontaine d'Ouche Community Centre: project leader
- FNJFC: Fédération Nationale des Jardins Familiaux et Collectifs: the National Federation for Allotment Gardens: project design, definition of the management structure



Encounters between allotment gardeners in NADESHDA and North Rhine-Westphalia

Learning together to preserve the creation

Werner Heidemann



Large and comfortable playing areas in the children's centre

Looking back – how it all began

What first began as a rough plan, sketched out more than two decades ago in the wake of the Chernobyl nuclear reactor disaster (1986) by concerned Christians in East and West, has meanwhile developed into a wonderful, full-scale project that enjoys the support of many hands and hearts. For more than twenty years, children aged between 6 and 17 who have been affected by the catastrophe have been coming to stay at the NADESHDA Centre (nadezhda is the Russian word for 'hope') for periods of almost four weeks, to enjoy a range of

recreational and educational activities and benefit from the medical support available. This has now grown into a self-managed recreational village, located in an area unaffected by the radiation, and comprises residential buildings, catering facilities, gardening activities, carpentry, sports and playgrounds, a schooling centre, and cultural and social activities. And NADESHDA continues to grow – the medical facilities have been modernised and the canteen expanded. In the interest of sustainable, environmentally friendly development, the centre's energy requirements are supplied from renewable sources, including woodchips and solar power.

The ecologically compatible cultivation of fruit and vegetables ensures that the centre's young residents enjoy fresh garden products that are not contaminated from either fertilisers or pesticides. The project has been supported from the start by allotment gardeners from Westphalia-Lippe, who have provided money donations and advice as well as supplying seeds.

NADESHDA – hope and the future

How does the future look for NADESHDA? Well, to put it uncompromisingly, NADESHDA's future is ensured for decades to come. Even if the shocking events of the nuclear disaster of 1986 have faded in the memory of the general public, they remain a fact of life in many areas of Belarus. Seventy percent of the radioactive fallout descended here, affecting a quarter of the population, including 500,000 children. Anyone visiting the area today cannot fail to notice that the invisible enemy – radioactivity – could not be driven out, and that it not only has people firmly in its control, but also soil, water, animals and plants. And this is likely to remain so for the centuries to come. Abandoned fields and villages are the silent witnesses of the catastrophe. Children – our planet's future – are the ones most strongly affected by the radioactive hazards. There are frighteningly high incidences of lethal deformities, weak immune systems, thyroid cancer and leukaemia in the areas affected by radioactivity – at levels that are



Planting trees for the future of NADESHDA, from left: Peter Schulz, vice president, Werner Heidemann, director, and Wilhelm Spieß, president of the regional association.

ten to twenty times higher than in unaffected areas. Those in Belarus who were affected by Chernobyl will never be able to return home to normal town and village life.

The NADESHDA project has planted considerable seeds of hope for these people. It allows young people to spend a few weeks living with no fear of radiation, where they can drink clean water and eat healthy fruit and vegetables in an atmosphere of environmental awareness and education, based on the careful use of natural resources such as soil, water and air. More and more disabled children and teenagers are coming to the centre to enjoy a few weeks of recreation.

Today, the centre is able to simultaneously accommodate 310 children and teenagers in its facilities. In the summer months, a further 140 young people come to the campsite located at the beautiful Vileyka reservoir to

enjoy their leisure time there. Over the last two decades, as many as 70,000 children and teenagers have come to know and love NADESHDA, a figure to be justly proud of. For the founders of the project, a beautiful dream has come true. At the beginning of the nineteen-nineties, nobody could have guessed that such a dynamic project

could arise out of ruins, at a time of unforeseen political transformation in East and West.

What is it that connects allotment gardeners from Westphalia with NADESHDA?

There are many allotment gardeners from Westphalia-Lippe who support NADESHDA in many different ways to the best of their abilities. Wolfgang Menzel, the former chairman of the Hamm-Kreis Unna district association, who passed away in 2005, laid the foundations of the activities more than twenty years ago. Gardening enthusiasts from the Hamm region were there from the start, helping to develop the project. With great motivation, the participants worked together to plant the first fruit trees, later also developing plans for the natural cultivation of fruit and vegetable crops in collaboration with their Belarusian partners. They also acquired seeds, plants and gardening equipment. This gave rise to an ecologically founded

The children from NADESHDA demonstrate their creative abilities; guests can purchase a unique artwork in exchange of a donation.



gardening operation, which is recognised as a pilot project in Belarus.

Over time, more and more clubs and associations joined in the activities. Meanwhile, German-Belarusian encounters are taking place every year between Belarus and North Rhine-Westphalia. The Landesschule der Kleingärtner [regional school for allotment gardeners] in Lünen formed the central accommodation for our 37 guests from Belarus from 12th until 19th August 2014. Every day, they travelled to different places in Westphalia, to familiarise themselves with the area and its people and to visit allotments and municipal parks, and even the state horticultural show [Landesgartenschau] in Zülpich, and to learn more about urban planning and restructuring. In December, we will begin our regular 'Deeds Instead of Christmas Cards' campaign. Rather than sending Christmas greetings, the regional association will give donations to NADESHDA as a sign of the Good News, and many other associations, clubs and allotment gardeners will be joining in and giving their donations. This year's Christmas donations will be used to construct a photovoltaic power plant. By using solar energy, the recreation centre will be able to secure its own energy in a way that is both inexpensive and environmentally friendly. NADESHDA continues to grow and connect the people in East and West, in Belarus and Germany, far beyond the project itself. Many partnerships and friendships, both on a personal level and on the level of the associations, have evolved, which not only enrich our lives personally but represent a valuable building block on the way to a unified Europe.

Birthday without borders

NADESHDA's birthday celebrations on 26th and 27th September 2014 were a chance both to look back and to look forward, with plenty of congratulations, joint singing and conversation.



Many happy returns!

At the large birthday celebration attended by young people from the project as well as those employed in it plus several guests from both Europe and Japan, director Werner Heide-mann presented the allotment garden-er organisations in North Rhine-West-phalia and Germany and also outlined the involvement of the allotment garden-ers from Westphalia-Lippe in the NADESHDA project. And there was even a birthday present: Wilhelm Spieß, president of the allotment garden-ers from Westphalia-Lippe, presented a check for the sum of 7,000 euros, which had been raised from donations. This splendid figure is the result of last year's campaign, 'Deeds Instead of Christmas Cards', as well as other activities of, among others

others, the women's group and the church congregation of St. Barbara in Lünen-Brambauer. This birthday present will be invested in a very visible way, in renovating the children's accommodation buildings. Moreover, all friends and partners demonstrated their solidarity with NADESHDA by jointly planting an avenue of trees.

We wish to continue shaping the future together.

Allotment gardens – Bio gardens:

Measures to promote making urban spaces greener

Text and photos from the FiBL, Mrs Ingrid Jahrl and Dr Home



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 Institut de recherche de l'agriculture biologique
 Research Institute of Organic Agriculture
 Istituto di ricerca dell'agricoltura biologica
 Instituto de investigaciones para la agricultura orgánica

The project started in 2013-2014 in the towns of Bâle, Lausanne, Luzerne and Saint Gall, by four associations in each town. Financial support for the project was ensured by the OFEV (Office Fédéral de l'Environnement), the four towns, the Swiss allotment garden federation and Bioterra. Workshops were organised in most of the participating towns before the final report was drafted, which will be released in spring 2015 and will include the results and methods.

1. Summary

The study, which focused on the attitude of gardeners towards biologi-

cal gardening, their knowledge and execution of this type of gardening in the four Swiss towns, revealed six essential results or weaknesses. The analysis showed that the bio gardeners' definition of bio gardening didn't always correspond to their practices. Only one party amongst the gardeners who considered themselves "bio" admitted to having extensive knowledge of bio gardening and not always applying biological methods. The study also demonstrated that bio gardening was sometimes seen in a bad light and considered equivalent to poor maintenance of the garden. Instructions on environmentally friendly

gardening do exist at an association/town level, but not all gardeners were aware of them. Furthermore, it appears that gardeners don't make good enough use of the offer of information about bio gardening. However, on the other hand, the information available is limited. The gardeners' attitude towards biological gardening and its importance to those around them also play just as important a role in this respect. Neighbours and the associations don't always fully support bio gardening. Furthermore, those whose mother tongue is not German or French are very interested in bio gardening, but there is only a small

amount of information on the topic available to them.

The results allowed different measures to be defined. On one hand, it must be noted that more importance must be placed on bio gardening at the heart of associations as well as by town administration. The study revealed that there is truly an interest in bio gardening, but it always comes up against a certain amount of scepticism. The reason for being and the use of biological methods must be more prominent in the offers of information and training. Associations' communications must furthermore



place more importance on bio gardening. This means that the rules of bio gardening must be more prominent and controlled, which is not currently the case. Competitions and prizes for gardens rich in biodiversity could promote bio gardening at the heart of associations, whilst encouraging gardeners to adopt this way of gardening. The diversification of the offers of information and training is another route to explore. In one respect, more

courses must be put forward, particularly by local associations. For this to happen, we could look to reinforce collaboration with experts from Bio-terra, for example. Social media could be better utilised to facilitate communication between the different associations, on a local as well as national level. In general, it would be timely to propose more opportunities for networking. This could happen by nominating representatives dedicated to bio gardening within the associations, but also by putting in place more training methods for people who are interested, who in turn would then act as mentors/eco-advisors. Also, a mentoring scheme for new gardeners and new tenants could help them to learn this type of gardening. In general, we need cooperation between existing organisations, and initiatives by local associations need to be reinforced. The gardeners often don't know how environmentally friendly they are, so it would be useful to offer them more "tools" to help them. A self-assessment tool of biological gardening could help them to evaluate their actions and offer ways to improve. The same improvements could be achieved if it were possible to offer them the chance to analyse their soil at a reasonable cost. A labelling system for bio gardens could also constitute an incentive to get into bio gardening. And finally, a list of biological products could help gardeners to replace man-made chemical products with biological products.

2. Introduction and context of the study

In an urban setting, allotment gardens play an important social and ecological role (OFEV 2006). The Swiss allotment garden federation and the individual towns (Bâle, Luzerne, Saint Gall) aim to develop a use for allotment gardens that is environmentally friendly, or biological. The reasons for this approach are varying degrees of soil pollution in gardens and the importance of allotment gardens in preserving biodiversity in towns. Howev-

er, the analysis carried out on Swiss allotment gardens reveals that the notion of environmentally friendly gardening is often translated as simply giving up man-made pesticides and chemical fertilisers (Kern 2005, Christl et al. 2004), whilst other essential aspects such as promoting biodiversity or preserving the water cycle and soil are neglected.

If, thanks to the research, we now know the reasons that motivate consumers and farmers to act in an environmentally friendly way (e.g. Vogel and Larcher 2007, Stolz et al. 2011), we nevertheless lack information on how to encourage users of allotment gardens to act in an environmentally friendly way (i.e. eco-gardening). Actions are, in effect, influenced by a number of factors. According to Ajzen (1991), attitudes towards ecological gardening play an essential role. According to Fietkau and Kessel (1981), knowledge has an equal effect on behaviour. Moreover, attitude and knowledge are closely linked. An existing attitude can be changed by acquiring new knowledge. Conversely, attitudes and values also affect the manner in which people adapt to information and knowledge. According to Jurt (2003), a change in behaviour initiated externally can't happen without information. According to Ajzen (1991), another determining factor that motivates actions is peer pressure, which pushes someone to adopt or reject an action.

In the allotment garden environment, social networks play a leading role (Wohatschek 2008). Being member of an allotment garden association means being part of a social network formed of people of different ages, ethnic origins and family or professional status (BMVBS and BBR 2008). The importance of the topic of protecting nature and environment at the heart of the allotment garden movement is also the function of the information led by the gardening associations, the federations and the towns (BMVBS

and BBR 2008). In this regard, the allotment garden associations and the towns play a central role, as they can influence the ways of gardening that are adopted, and the gardeners' ecological and environmental awareness through their rules, regulations and offers of advice and training. However, the successful implementation of an action does not depend solely on the intent, i.e. the desire to accomplish an action or to achieve an objective, but also, in part, on the motivation such as the availability of resources (e.g. time, money, skills, working with others) (Pregernig 1999).



3. Objectives of the project

In this context, the project allowed us to also determine the state of the gardeners' knowledge and learning requirements concerning biological use of the gardens as well as their attitude towards biological gardening. The study focused particularly on the importance of knowledge of biological gardening. Methods were devised to reinforce environmental awareness and promote biological gardening

whilst taking into account the existing offers of training and support, and involving the users of allotment gardens and their associations. The objective of these methods is to support gardeners in using their garden in a biological way and, in doing so, to promote the healthy growth of produce and develop biodiversity.

The following points were the topic of an analysis for the project:

- What knowledge do the users of allotment gardens have about biological gardening?
- What influencing factors encourage/hinder biological gardening? What role do perceptions, knowledge and circumstances (socio-demographic, institutional) play?
- How is the transfer of knowledge ensured within allotment garden associations and what improvements could be made? What is the role of social networks and how important are allotment gardens in this context?
- What role do supporting organisations (e.g. Bioterra) play?
- What information and advice do users of allotment gardens feel they need? What methods allow us to promote awareness of the environment and biological gardening amongst the users of allotment gardens? What resulting actions are relevant to the responsibilities of different parties (town administration, allotment garden associations, etc.)?

Self-managed garden brightens Amsterdam's warehouse district

Josien Segers (AVN, The Netherlands)



In the centre of Amsterdam, close to the Artis zoological garden is the Kadijkenbuurt district, also known as Kadijkeneiland. The name of the district refers to the two main streets: the Hoogte Kadijk and the Laagte Kadijk. The numerous former warehouses and shipyards date back to the period from the seventeenth to the twentieth century, when it was an area dedicated to shipping and industry. The neighbourhood later lost its industrial character and residential homes were built. From around 1970 onwards, hundreds of low-rent homes were developed, both in the former warehouses and in new-built premises.

Judith de Vries, Angie van Hoboken and Saskia Heins all live on the Laagte Kadijk. The three are the driving force behind 'Self-managed garden Laagte Kadijk'. Together with other local residents, they were able to prevent their entire neighbourhood being built on with high-rise new housing developments, roads for the use of the many cars and parking spaces. Instead, for the past year, their houses have been fronted by a beautiful, natural garden! When I paid them a visit at the end of September 2013, the garden was still brightly coloured with flowering perennials and ornamental grasses in autumn colours, and ornamental shrubs with berries.

Struggle

Judith, Angie and Saskia explained, "The municipal council initially planned to create a postage stamp-sized park on the small field on the other side of the road. Unfortunately, the private owner sold the land to a project developer. According to the building plans, our front gardens were due to disappear, and a new building was set to be developed right opposite. We were above all against the idea of the new development, as it would detract from our privacy."

"Following our protests, the new building was cut from four to just two storeys, and by way of compensation for our front gardens, we were awarded two long central strips between the houses on the other side of the road and our houses, as a self-managed green facility, measuring in total two hundred square metres. Also in exchange for the front gardens we got large earthenware pots that we could plant and look after ourselves."

Course in Natural garden design

Because Saskia and Judith have an allotment garden, they receive a copy of the allotment gardening magazine "De Tuinliefhebber". They were both attracted by a notice in 2011 about the course 'Natural garden design' by Roos Broersen. Together with Angie, they signed up for the course. "The course provided us with a whole raft of ideas for laying out the green strip. Together the three of us prepared a folder of ideas, but came up against the obstacle of producing an actual garden plan. Because the new devel-

opment and garden plan in the street were not yet ready, we were unable to create a clear idea of the whole project, in our mind's eye."

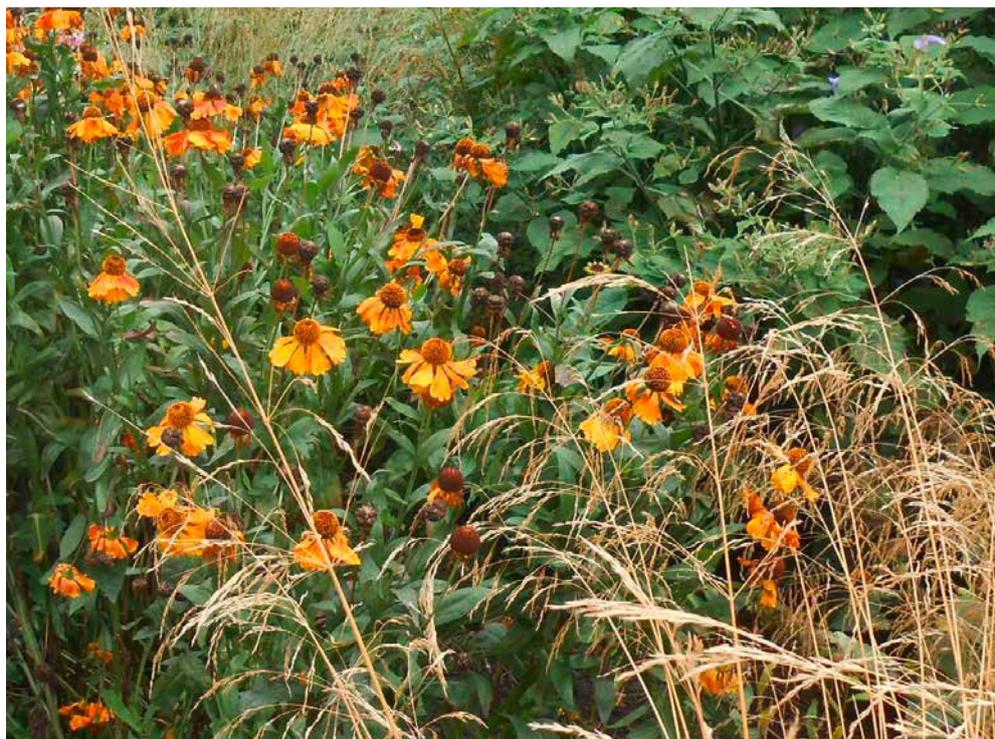
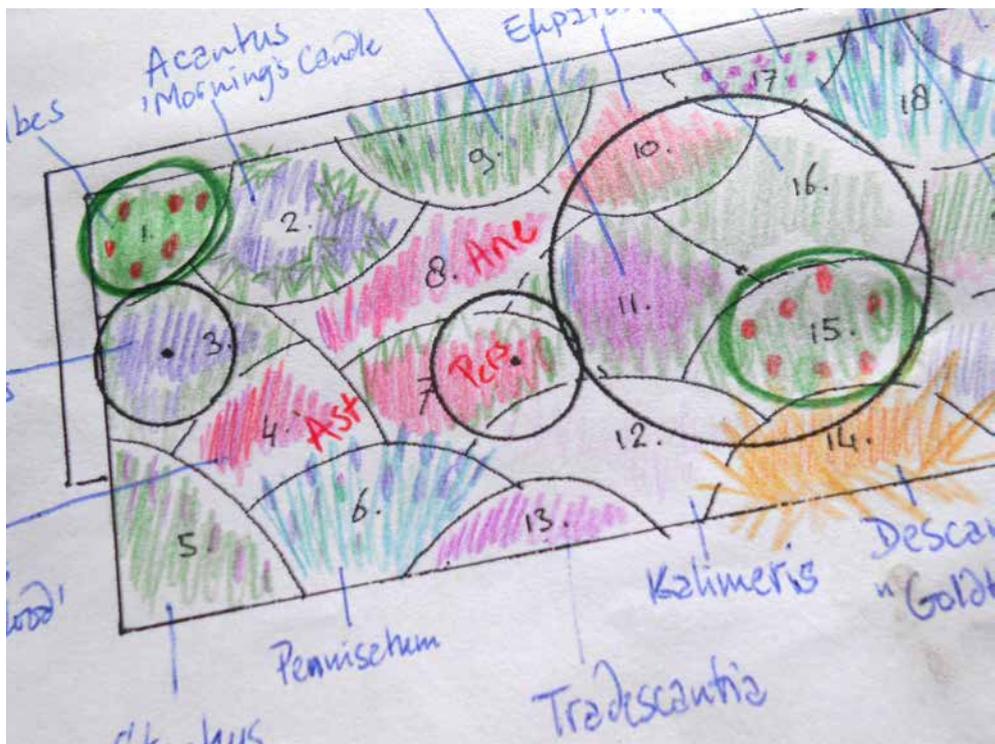
"At the recommendation of Roos, we called in Dirk de Winter from the nursery de Morgen. He designs gardens and ecological planting plans. To secure our privacy, and to prevent vandalism, we changed our idea from creating a 'seated garden' and instead opted for a 'viewing garden'. Dirk put our ideas into a well-prepared garden plan. The plants themselves were purchased from his nursery in Obdam where he grows and experiments with plants that are able to survive without any chemical treatment or fertiliser." (for information see: www.newgenerationplants.nl/tuinen/)

Negotiations with the council

"The Municipality of Amsterdam is divided into city districts. The policy in our city district aims to retain as much green as possible, above all in the form of self-managed green such as front gardens and planted strips. When it comes to a 'self-managed garden' or 'self-managed green facility', residents are awarded a piece of land by the municipal council, which they are then permitted to lay out and maintain according to their own ideas. The layout, materials and maintenance costs are paid for by the municipality.

The municipal authorities approved the garden plan produced by Dirk. Although they felt that we should have produced the plan ourselves, we swayed them with our argument that the advice from experts and professionals would help to avoid errors and additional costs. In the end they also paid for Dirk's plan and actually laid out our garden, including the paving, the raised borders, the steps, the soil and the plants.

Users of self-managed gardens are free to choose the plants, but not the trees. No large trees are permitted.



The silver birches we had initially selected were not approved by the council. The four Koelreuteria now in the garden do not grow so tall and are attractive throughout the year."

Koelreuteria goes by a number of common names including the Golden rain tree, the Pride of India, the China

tree and the Varnish tree. One of the four is already bearing the fruit and seedpods so characteristic of the tree.

Down to work at last

"Because autumn is the best time for planting trees, we had to postpone the planting of the perennials and shrubs



people go away on holiday in the summer, we were worried that our plants would not survive the dry conditions. Fortunately, whenever help is needed, we are able to rely upon a group of willing helpers.”

Confidence in the development

“Because the plants have settled in so well in just a few months, and the garden is already looking so good, we are confident in the success of the project. And we have been confirmed in our belief. The ‘Self-managed garden Laagte Kadijk’ has inspired the council to plant a number of other green strips in the area with almost exactly the same varieties.

We hope that this area of green outside our front doors will in the future not only attract sparrows, parakeets, seagulls and birds passing to and from the zoological gardens at Artis, but also many other varieties. All we have to do now is wait patiently until the trees and shrubs grow a little larger.”

for a whole year. The municipality provided temporary plants for that period and the whole garden was awash with red and yellow cannas and begonias! Once the council staff had planted the trees, we could get down to work, at last. In February 2012, eight of us, instructed by Dirk and his assistants,

planted twenty-eight different perennials and various types of shrub.

“Right from the start, the gardening group consisted of seven people. The maintenance work such as watering and weeding was above all time-consuming at the start. Because so many

For the self-managed garden, the following strong and attractive plants (among others) were chosen:

Perennials:

<i>Persicaria amplexicaulis</i> ‘Border Beauty’	Mountain Fleece	Red
<i>Aster novae-angliae</i> ‘High Class’	New England Aster	Ruby red
<i>Acanthus hybrid</i> ‘Morning Candle’	Bear’s breaches	Lilac-pink
<i>Geranium x oxonianum</i> ‘Maurice Moka’	Crane’s beak	Pale pink
<i>Anemone hybrid</i> ‘Serenade’	Japanese anemone	Pink
<i>Kalimeris hybrid</i> ‘Madiva’	Aster	Light blue
<i>Tradescantia andersoniana</i> ‘Good Luck’	Spider lily	Violet
<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i>	‘Goldtau’	Ornamental grass Straw-coloured flowering heads
<i>Helenium hybride</i> ‘Sahins Early Flowerer’	Sneezeweed	Orange

Shrubs:

<i>Aronia melanocarpa</i>	Chokeberry	Red autumn colour
<i>Sambucus racemosa</i>	Red elderberry	Red berries

From allotment gardens to community gardens

Hervé Bonnavaud



Foreword:

Gardening is undoubtedly the oldest form of agriculture. According to historians the first human tribes in Europe that lived from hunting, fishing and picking fruit, became agriculturists about 7,000 years ago. That was a formidable revolution that allowed the homo sapiens species to develop very rapidly. He then was able to get a more abundant, regular and diversified diet all the year round. At the beginning agriculture did not resemble our modern agriculture. It was more like a primitive form of gardening or to what we now call urban agriculture. Urban agriculture consists of micro plots for the neighbouring families and for self consumption. In France Urban agriculture also includes the «Jardins d'insertion», «Jardins de Cocagne» and «AMAP».

- **The “Jardins d'insertion”** are meant for the poorest people, usually unemployed and/or the neighbour/immigrants. These people are taught to grow vegetables collectively for their own consumption and to learn new skills which might help them to get integrated and find a job.
- **The “Jardins de Cocagne”** have got the same finality but they are organised on a larger scale. They require a 2 to 4 ha large piece of land to produce organic vegetables and fruit that are mainly sold directly to the surrounding population in baskets every week. The gardeners are employed by the association for 6 to 18 months thanks to subsidies from the state.

- **AMAP”: this acronym stands for “Association pour la Maintenance d'une Agriculture Paysanne”.** They are installed close to the cities and provide organic food to the neighbourhood and usually to the school canteens where the local authorities want to encourage organic farming. The land (a few hectares) belongs to the farmers.

Urban agriculture is the essential form of agriculture in Africa, where millions of people depend upon it for their survival (Report 2012 of the FAO entitled «Growing greener cities in Africa»).

This was to underline the fundamental importance of gardening and horticultural activities throughout the world since prehistoric times.

That human activity may have evolved with time and according to the level of development of the various societies but, as we are going to see now, it is still of interest and its development could provide solutions for the future, even in our rich countries where traditional farmers have almost disappeared to be replaced by large agricultural enterprises which have lost almost all contact with the nourishing soil. In fact that intensive agriculture produces cattle food, bio fuels and products for exports but less and less to feed the local populations that have to rely more and more on food imports from all over the world.

1) An environment that evolved (1890 - 1950)

In the 19th century, allotment gardens were born in a social context which is totally different from that of today.

In the Northern European countries

the populations suffered from the consequences of the industrial revolution. Many agricultural workers were attracted by the jobs offered in the iron, coal and textile industries. These new workers were exploited, lived in indescribable poor conditions whereas the working days were very long and the Sunday rest missing. In order to survive the families were forced to make children work from the age of five on. The flats were very small and unhealthy. Many workers suffered from tuberculosis and alcoholism. Many families had not enough to eat. Men were victims of the violence of this system and women and children suffered from the violence caused by worn-out men who had drunk too much.

In different countries, for example India, the same working and living conditions still exist today despite international conventions.

The founders of the allotment movement, for example Abbé Jules Lemire in France or Dr Moritz Schreber in Germany, proposed to the new worker class garden plots of a sufficient size to guarantee the subsistence of these large families. In France the first allotments exceeded 600 square metres. One can still find such large plots in the region of Calais and Dunkerque where there still exist areas of great poverty and long time workless people dependent on the cultivation of potatoes which need much space.

During the 19th century up to 1950 there were sufficient grounds in and around the cities to create allotments. There were many allotments in France.

The first and above all the Second World War contributed to the development of the allotments. They allowed to solve the problem concerning the providing of food and of the subsistence of the population due to the disorganization of the traditional economic circuits. Different towns transformed parks and available grounds



into war gardens and requisitioned sometimes even abandoned grounds in order to put them free of cost at the disposal of families suffering from the food shortage. You can find the same phenomenon in England and the States where thousands of "victory gardens" were created.

Before the second World war 80% of the population lived in rural areas.

II) The damages of the «30 gloriousness» (name given to the 30 years of rapid economic development that followed World War II).

After the Second World War the situation evolved very rapidly in most countries in Europe. Cities grew very fast to face the baby boom. New towns appeared in a few years' time, towns that grew like mushrooms in the suburbs of the main cities.

That development often led to the disappearance of the old allotment gardens. It is estimated that 90 % of them were destroyed during these three decades: their number fell from 900 000 at the end of the war to 150 000 nowadays.

I have to admit that in the late 60s

the standards of living of the French population rose dramatically together with the development of leisures. The workers now had much better wages and time to go on holiday to the seaside, the mountains, the country... and to practice sports and were less dependent on their plots. The plot holders abandoned their gardens without much struggle.

The remaining sites were pushed outside the towns and cities, often on bad lands, along the new motorways, sometimes on polluted land.

Thus the positive evolution of our society caused great damage to allotment gardens.

III) The emergence of the concept of environment

In 1971, under President Georges Pompidou, Robert Poujade is appointed minister of the protection of nature and of the environment. He will stay in office for 3 years and will call his ministry « le ministère de l'impossible ». There is no doubt that the creation of this ministry is the symbol of a significant evolution of our society after the excesses of the previous period following the war.



An interest for the environment is born and the state and local authorities have started to realize the benefits for the urban populations of allotment gardens. They have become aware of the need to preserve them.

The November 10th, 1976 agriculture law has redefined allotment gardens and has made it compulsory for the local authorities to replace the allotment gardens that had to be destroyed to build public equipments. The Safer (Société d'Aménagement Foncier et d'Établissement Rural) was the tool to get new grounds.

The number of allotment gardens ceased to fall and stabilized. Allotment gardens are now better protected but at the same time we observe an important pressure from their neighbours to destroy old derelict sites that look ugly in the urban landscape. They are no longer accepted. Local authorities own most of the land on which new allotment garden sites are created and to answer their demand the FNJFC starts to modify their design. The environment is now taken into account, so is their insertion into the urban landscape and the quality

of life of the plot holders. Recreation grounds are built for children, places where their parents can meet and organize festivities, barbecues...

Large families being then much rarer than earlier, the average size of the plots is reduced to 250 m². At the same time we observe a change in

the social origin and age of the tenants: they tend to be slightly younger and even if the majority is still composed of retired men from the working class, we see the emergence of employees and other social groups.

At the same time land is getting rarer and more expensive and less available for the creation of allotment garden sites in spite of the renewed interest for that activity.

IV)The emergence of new forms of allotment gardens

1) Shared gardens

The new shared gardens appeared in France some 15 years ago, in accordance with the model of the Community Gardens that were created in the USA in the 70s by Liz Christy. Liz Christy is the founder of the „green guerilla“, movement aiming at taking urban unoccupied land for the poorest inhabitants.

They developed rather rapidly in large cities such as Paris, Lyon, Marseille, Lille, Nantes... They are usually supported by the local authorities that view them as a means to solve social problems.



These shared gardens, though often short-lived since they are established on land which is meant to be built in a near future, are very successful among politicians and the media. Their number was estimated at about 1000 sites at the end of 2012.

These sites are sometimes hardly more than 100 m² large. On these shared gardens gardening, planting, tending the plot and harvesting are usually shared. In Paris, the tenants are not allowed to eat the vegetables they might grow.

It seems clear that in shared gardens the original and fundamental feeding function of allotment gardens has almost completely disappeared. Instead of food their members grow social relationships.

Shared gardens are more attractive to the middle class and sometimes upper urban middle class people than to the lower class people.

2) Integration gardens (Les Jardins d'Insertion)

Mass unemployment rose steeply in the mid 1970s. To try and alleviate its consequences, as soon as the early 80s, the French Federation of Allotment Gardens (FNJFC) together with some local authorities and groups of people involved in social activities imagined to offer a plot to the unemployed people.

This was frequently a failure. Most of them were not interested and motivated at all and those who started sowing and planting, sometimes gave up before the first harvest.

Conversely, the use of gardening and horticultural activities by such associations as « Les Jardins de Cocagne » or « Les Jardins du Coeur » to bring people back to work and to give them a new skill proved successful and keeps developing.

The FNJFC learned from these ex-



periments and thanks to its «Bureau d'Etudes» designed new concepts of allotment gardens taking into account every piece of available land in a given environment and the new demand of urban dwellers.

3) Allotment Gardens at the foot of blocks of flats (Jardins en pied d'immeubles)

In 1995, the French Federation decided to create a Study and Design Office to serve the demands of its members and of the local authorities and social housing agencies too. The aim of this new tool being to develop new forms of allotment gardens and equipments adapted to the specific needs of plot holders (tool sheds, tool boxes, compost bins, secure water meters...) This new concept of allotment gardens is based on the following observation: contrary to what was previously believed, there is land available in most towns and that land is worth nothing. I mean that it cannot be sold to anybody since it is entirely devoted to green spaces. Moreover, this land costs the housing agencies a lot of money: they have to mow the lawns, trim the trees and bushes, look after and water the flower beds... Their

owners are easily convinced of the advantages of turning part of it into gardens for the inhabitants.

Besides, these plots, usually between 40 and 50 m² large, produce vegetables for the low income dwellers of the flats, reduce the maintenance costs, improve the urban biodiversity. The advantages are numerous and these gardens have a bright future.

The gardens at the foot of blocks of flats are a means of recycling sterile urban spaces. There are plenty of these grounds in town.

4) Allotment Gardens on roof tops (jardins sur les toiture-terrace)

In 2001 the FNJFC created the first site of community gardens (jardins partagés) on the 1000 m² roof of a multi-storey car park in Boulogne-Billancourt (West of Paris). The plots were 20 m² and were separated by paved alleys. There was only one tool shed and the gardeners — most of them being women from African origin — shared the tools. There was a common water point and watering cans.

This new type of urban allotment gar-

dens is now developing rapidly in a mineral environment where land is totally absent.

5) *Square gardens (potagers en carré)*

In 2011 the French Federation of allotment gardens was commissioned by the city of Dijon (Burgundy) to develop a new concept of allotment gardens on a 600 m² piece of land attached to a social centre. The mayor wanted to satisfy the demand of at least 30 families that lived in flats at walking distance. Most of the families were in need (unemployed, single women with children...) and had no experience at all of gardening.

The French Federation of allotment gardens designed a new model: square plots 1.5×1.5×0.40m filled with compost. 65 squares were built on the site. Each person got one square, a couple was allowed 2 plots and a family with children was given 3. Thus 32 people or families were able to get an allotment garden in June 2011. Besides 3 raised beds were installed for disabled people in a wheelchair.

Since that time two other sites were created according to this model.

Despite the small size of these plots, the output is significant due to the quality of the soil and the people do not need to buy any expensive tools. It is a good way to initiate these new gardeners. We must point out the educational value of these “miniature” allotment gardens.

Conclusion

Nowadays, almost 80 % of the population live in urban areas.

This led us to change our views and to design new models, new forms of allotment gardens to answer the growing needs of this new urban population.

The new allotment gardeners are quite different from those in the

1890s, even if the economical crisis generates new demands of people who desperately need a piece of land to survive by growing their own:

- they usually have no experience of gardening ;
- many of them are women or young couples ;
- those who have a job do not have much time to spend in the garden ;
- most of them are interested in organic gardening
- want a plot in a collective allotment garden in order to meet other people, from different origins.

The size of the plot is not the most important thing for them, they are more interested in the quality of the equipments and the social life.

The functions of these new types of allotment gardens are multiple: economical, food production, therapeutic, educational, environmental, social...

Allotment gardens are a great contribution to the quality of life in large cities.

News from the federations

A. National Meetings

a) Finland

29th August 2015

National meeting of the presidents of the local associations

b) France

Organization of courses for our executive board members and gardeners concerning a natural gardening in relations with the program of the Ministry for Ecology « Ecophyto ». This program aims at reducing the pesticides outside the agricultural zones by half until 2018.

10th April 2015

A day meeting for our affiliated members. The subject is: "To cultivate biodiversity" The aim of this meeting is to propose techniques to our members enabling them to participate in scientific programs opened to the public and dealing with subjects on biodiversity in the gardens. This day is organized in cooperation with important associations on nature protection

11th April 2015

General assembly

c) Germany

20th – 22nd March Chemnitz

Management

Subject: get involved in the management of your association!

14th June 2015 Karlsruhe

„Day of the Garden“ 2015

24th – 26th April 2015 Halle

Public relations

Subject: making a speech with heart, engagement and reason

29th – 31th May 2015 Hamm

Legal matters I,

Subject: How to manage an allotment association. Part 1

26th – 28th June 2015 Offenbach

Gardening advice I

Subject: all weathers – the allotment in the climate change

5th September 2015 Rostock

27th assembly of the German allotment federation.

25th – 27th September 2015 Rahtenow

Gardening advice II

Subject: The wonderful world of roses

23rd – 25th October 2015 Hamburg

Legal matters II

Subject: Responsibility for establishing correct accounts

06th – 8th November 2015 Saarbrücken

Environment

Subject: a miniature world: Insects and spiders in the garden

d) Great-Britain

- General Assembly,
- Regional Allotment Officers Forums,
- Internal Training

e) Luxembourg

29th March 2015: National congress in Biver

f) Switzerland

21st January 2015:

Meeting of the Cost delegates in Basel

27th – 29th March 2015:

Eco Nature Congress in Basel

6th June 2015:

48th general assembly in Basel

Date to be fixed:

Meeting: Biodiversity 2020

B. DOCUMENTS

a) Belgium

The Flemish government supports the creation and the lay-out of allotment

garden parks.

Everywhere in Europe, but also on the other continents more and more attention is focused on allotment gardens and studies and scientific reports are made on allotments.

On request of the minister president Kris Peeters the University of Gent already realized a study in 2007 on the situation of allotments in Flanders both from the point of view of sociology and territorial planning.

This study proved that the number of existing allotments in Flanders and the region Brussels-Capital could be estimated up to 4,600 plots spread in over 114 allotment parks with a total surface of 137 hectares. Half of these allotments are situated in the Province of Antwerp.

The need of surfaces to create allotments has been confirmed in a new study by the University of Gent in 2010 at the demand of the Flemish allotment federation and with the financial support of the Flemish authorities. It appeared by this study that the need for additional allotments was not only limited to the big cities, but that this was also the case in the urban areas and in the communes. For the 10 biggest cities (city centers) and for 40 selected communes the need was estimated at approximately 283 hectares. Considering the current offer, the demand can only be satisfied up to a third.

b) France

Two films promoting allotments were created

- The first one was made for people in general and was shown in Utrecht.
- The second should sensitize the authorities and motivate them to create allotment sites.

The films can be seen on our home-

page and can be downloaded.

c) Germany

Weekly garden advice by dpa
 Monthly garden advice on Internet
 Monthly newsletter
 The review "Der Fachberater" 1-4/14
 Grüne Schriftenreihe no.232-237 in
 form of a CD
 Final brochure of the 23rd federal-
 competition „Gardens in the town
 planning“ 2014

d) Great-Britain

Flyer 2014:

- Membership Benefits Leaflet
- New Leaflets planned for 2015:*
- Keeping Hens and Rabbits on Allotments
- Honey Bees and Wild Pollinators
- The Voice of the Allotment Movement
- Water use on Allotments

e) Luxembourg

Review: Garden & Home: 9 issues
 per year for all the members
 Pocket booklet

f) Switzerland

Information paper 2014:
 Preparing the garden for winter

C. Useful Information

a) Belgium

Appeal for projects 2013

Till end of May 2013 associations and public authorities could ask for subsidies. There was an enormous number of demands. An independent jury has chosen 25 projects during summer 2013 and another 21 by the end of 2013. A budget of 500,000 € was reserved for all these projects. Our association has given its competent advice to several authorities and associations while writing their demand and assembling the documents for their dossier.

Inspiration day 2014

On 24th April 2014 the Flemish society for ground property organized in cooperation with our federation "Tuinhier" an inspiration day for the

communes and associations trying to gather ideas for the creation, the expansion, the lay-out or the modernization of allotments. Many people took part in this event day. It aimed at explaining more in detail the criteria for the acceptance and selection of the new demands. This day was also important to establish contacts in order to be able to ask later on for more information and support.

Wim Lybaert, gardener, amateur of allotments and producer of programs for the TV programme "Vier" laid the interesting discussions both with the participants of the round-table and the people who were present.

Call for projects 2014

This call for projects 2014 allowed the communes and associations to ask for subsidies for allotment gardens up to September 15th, 2014. More information related to this call and the criteria to receive a financial support were available in a regulation.

Our association again gave its competent advice to authorities and associations while writing their demand and assembling the documents for the dossier.

Minister Schauvliege approved 40 projects for allotment gardens by end of 2014. These projects can get a financial support either for the creation and lay-out of new allotments or for the extension and/or modernisation of existing allotments. Thanks to the call for projects 2014, one can estimate that there will be 500 additional allotments and that due to this fact the total surface of allotment gardens in Flandria will increase by more than 20 hectares.

Both for the existing and new allotments the main goal is the increase of the social cohesion, the creation of a meeting place for different generations and cultures, the creation of a group dynamic. The final goal is the autonomous management of the site. By this initiative Minister Schauvliege hopes that people will again have contact with a healthy food, with different flavours, with the own production

of a healthy food, with an active life in the fresh air, with alternative forms of physical movements (gardening) and an active life style.

The jury judged the quality of the projects according to criteria fixed in the call for projects such as the necessity of allotments, the authorizations received, the contribution to improve the environment quality by the care given to soil, health, social cohesion, specific groups, landscape and the exemplarity of the projects.

This represents now an important task for our association as the realization of the different projects is planned for spring 2015.

b) Switzerland

Project: Children of the Garden (Gartenkinder)

Project: Gardening at an advanced age

D. Law Changings

a) Germany

1st trimester 2015 – New issue of the 11th edition of the comment concerning the federal allotment law

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