



Hyphen 60

News from the Office

Office International du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux
association sans but lucratif | February 2017

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IMPRESSIONS FROM THE ALLOTMENT SITE RODELØKKENS IN OSLO



The allotment association “De Doordouwers” in Utrecht (NL) received the diploma for social activities

Association De Doordouwers -
interview by Josien Segers



Faruk und Annelies

The fellowship of gardening

The Allotment Park ‘De Doordouwers’ is located on the outskirts of Utrecht-Noord, close to the Overvecht district. The majority of this residential district comprises apartments that house some one hundred and twenty different nationalities.

The allotment association has been gardening here since 2006. The allotments are extremely popular, as they are situated close to the houses. Around half of all the gardeners have foreign roots. Here, they can work together and enjoy their gardens and one another’s company.

Annelies van Roosmalen is a member of the governing board of the allotment association. She invited a number of gardeners, each from a different country, to talk about their experience of gardening with so many different people. Fellow board member Faruk Alp was to meet us in his garden. On the way there, Annelies talked about the efforts of the allotment association to promote a sense of fellowship.

“I am responsible for contacts in and outside the association, and spend between four and six hours every week on administrative work. I live in the district and have some experience

of volunteer work. The most time and patience goes into the provision of information. For many of the newcomers, gardening in the Netherlands differs from the way things work in their home country. They also have to get used to the agreements and rules that apply in our allotment complex.”

Assisting Newcomers

“Over there is a plot intended for urban agriculture for the ‘A1 group’. It is a project set up by the association to encourage foreign women from the district to garden together. They receive guidance from a number of women from our allotment association. If all goes well, individual members can then switch to an allotment plot in our complex.”

The Importance of Understandable language

Faruk was waiting for the gardeners to arrive, on the terrace in his garden. Faruk explained,

“I am 55 years old and come from Turkey. I first started gardening here in 2006, and helped establish the complex. I am now general member of the governing board. My previous employment as a caretaker means I speak good Dutch. I pass on notices from the board to the gardeners. A few of them speak no or only limited Dutch. A number have never learned to read and write. It is essential that



you listen carefully to what they have to say, and communicate in understandable language! In my garden, everyone is welcome!"

Gardening Together

Mr Silanai has lived in the Netherlands for 14 years, and has been gardening here since 2009. He used to live in Kabul, Afghanistan, where he was a newspaper journalist, and wrote poetry and books about nature. *"In Kabul, I owned a 17 hectare plot of land with apples and grapes. I am delighted with this garden. I love reading and writing, my dictionaries and the computer. Gardening together and working together are good for me."*

Eating and drinking together

Roberta is from Sicily and has lived here for 21 years. *"As a child I learned to grow vegetables, from my grandmother. Shop-bought vegetables are tasteless. I was so happy when I was given my own garden here three years ago. I always try to make the best of things. The multicultural society here is a positive experience. I enjoy eating and drinking together with my Turkish neighbours and others."*

I am a member of the Natural Gardening Committee, and have learned a great deal. Last June, we received the three-star award."

Learning to work with nature

Annelies added, *"The Natural Gardening project is an excellent means of providing more information and increasing awareness among the gardeners of gardening skills and interaction with nature. For example grass snakes. In their own countries, our foreign members see snakes as dangerous. By providing information in the form of newsletters, we have attempted to turn that fear into awareness. They now all know that grass snakes are not dangerous and are happy to see grass snakes in the gardens!"*

For many of the foreign gardeners, the idea of compost is new because garden waste is not composted in their own countries. We have to be constantly alert to explain what can and cannot be put on the compost heap."

A garden means freedom

Elias has been gardening here since the early days, and also helped establish the original allotments. Elias is Dutch.

"For me the garden means freedom. I have two gardens right in the back. I enjoy the view across broad skies, woodland and green fields. My garden has a lawn, flowers and vegetables. I often give my vegetables away because I grow too much for my own use."

Never without flowerd and plants

The garden of Nurcan Ugurlukoc is packed with vegetables, flowers and aromatic herbs. Camomile flowers have been laid out to dry for tea. She also collects seeds from her plants.

"I used to live in Turkey. I came to the Netherlands when I was twelve. Initially I could only garden on my balcony. I started gardening with the A1 group, and have now had my own allotment for two years. Spending time outside and gardening are healthy and good for my relaxation, which gives me the strength to carry on. I could never live without flowers and plants!"





Brought together by a shared hobby

Harrie Lachchi is from Suriname, and has been a member from the early days. In his garden, he has a wide variety of vegetables, many of them from Suriname, such as peppers and Amsoi, a type of spinach.

They need temperatures of at least 30°C to thrive, so Harrie carefully raises them in trays under glass, and in a greenhouse. He also grows Tayer, a costly leaf vegetable, that you prepare in the same way as spinach. *"I grow vegetables for my family, my children and my grandchildren. The allotment has people from many different countries but we are all brought together by a shared hobby: gardening is something we can all enjoy together!"*

Helping hands

Khadija Chikhi was born in Morocco, and has lived in the Netherlands since 1973. Khadija has had her own allotment since this spring.

"Just as I started, my garden shed was blown down by strong winds. Immediately a group of friends helped me rebuild. I keep on coming across masses of small stones in the garden. How on earth did they get here? They all have to be removed one by one."

Khadija enjoys experimenting. She has sown all kinds of vegetable and

herb seeds. Khadija helps the women in the A1 group.

"The garden is a source of relaxation. I am not able to do any heavy work, but there are always other people willing to help me. All the different cultures make it an enjoyable activity. My seating area is open to all women. I am grateful and recognise the importance of being sociable for others."

Gardening makes you happy

Thanks to the efforts of the allotment association, the careful guidance offered to newcomers and the attention for good and clear communication, this is a pleasant allotment park

where people garden in harmony. The open and welcoming attitude of the garden of course plays a key role.

The gardeners of the Doordouwers allotment association understand the meaning of hard work on this site. Many of them have created their own space for their much loved hobby, from nothing. Their garden is a source of happiness that they are also happy to share with others according to the motto: 'Work together and enjoy together!'



The allotment association of Feldkirchen near Graz (A) received the diploma for an ecological gardening



Welcome to the allotment garden area Feldkirchen.

Feldkirchen is located in the suburban area of the city of Graz in Styria in the south of Austria.

The area is situated between fields, however close to the village centre and residential districts of Feldkirchen.

It has a long-standing tradition: After the Second World War, in 1946 Franz Saringer, the founder and first president of the allotment garden association has presented the idea of making available a part of an abandoned property of a former mill to the citizens of Feldkirchen. The municipality of Feldkirchen agreed, as in the post-war years, food was very limited and especially citizens without land appreciated the opportunity of growing own vegetables for their families.

Initially the area was just simple farmland, subdivided in plots, separated by paths covered over by grassland. During the years, the whole area has changed, garden sheds have been built and today the allotments are mostly oases for recreation and leisure activity. However the original grass paths have survived: they have never been asphalted or paved. To keep the paths in optimal condition, the garden rules provide a driving ban on all kinds of vehicles. Cars are not allowed and bicycles have to be pushed. Any types of equipment, construction material or other goods have to be transported to the allotments with wheelbarrows or bike trailers.

Except planting hedgerows, not higher than 1,50m, fences are not allowed; this enables a broad view over the gardens without borderlines.

Nowadays the gardens are mostly used as large living rooms, but in these living rooms there are some installations and furniture creating an ecological environment.

In spring time the meadows are covered with colourful flowers like yellow, rose or violet primroses daisies, violets, veronicas or chickweed. In late spring time the gardeners are very careful avoiding marguerites when mowing the lawn, so that groups of marguerites remain in the green.

During the last years more and more raised beds have appeared for growing vegetables. Thus large amounts of green cuttings can easily be re-used serving as fertilizer and do not have to be removed by car. There are very large and expensive types of raised beds made of high-quality wood, but also very cheap ones made of simple compost makers, fulfilling the same requirements.

Several types of herb spirals have been built in the gardens.

The current chair of the board, Heidi Schmitt, is a biologist and also the other members of the executive board are quite liberal and respect the ideas of the gardeners, allowing more freedom and creative possibilities. The board especially puts emphasis on nature near gardening. So some plots are more similar to cottage gardens. This is in contrast to other associations with strictly regu-



lated allotment areas focussing more on aspects of urban gardening.

Even an experimental garden, which is not really the prototype of an allotment garden, is welcome. The tenant is cultivating different varieties of vines, fruits, berries and vegetables.

Insect-hotels, nesting boxes, dead tree trunks and branches are placed in the gardens. This results in a large variety of animals in the allotment garden area. In winter tomtits are frequenting the bird feeder. In spring time tomtits, sparrows and blackbirds are feeding the squab. A rose chafer (Cetoniinae) is visiting a flower. The protected goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*) is picking sunflower seeds from a mature plant in late summer. A cross spider is weaving its web. The peacock butterfly (*Aglais io*), the red admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*) and the bumblebee (*Bombus*) are attracted by fragrant buddleias (*Buddleja davidii*).

The allotment garden area Feldkirchen is also the home of aquatic animals: numerous wet biotopes have been arranged, hosting frogs, grass snakes and fishes.

Nowadays, 70 years after the establishment of the allotment garden area Feldkirchen, food production is becoming increasingly important. However for a different reason: The newspapers are full of reports about food scandals and it is generally known that in industrial food production herbicides are applied. Thus worries and uncertainty are growing among the population. On the other hand health consciousness is increasing and ever more people are changing their nutritional habits. The number of vegetarians and vegans is generally growing fast. Ecological gardening is an optimal solution to meet all these requirements and for many gardeners, particularly young families, cultivation of high quality fruit and vegetables has gained a

renewed interest. Freshly harvested food from the own organic garden is rich of vitamins and essential minerals and guarantees best qualities.

Moreover the gardens harbour an especially rich treasure of a large variety of kitchen herbs and medicinal herbs, however with fluent transition: Several species of mint, sage, lovage, basil, rosemary, thyme, parsley, lavender, calendula and many others. This land of plenty is a natural larder as well as a natural pharmacy. This paradise has to be preserved, so that also the following generations can benefit from it.

Hippocrates, the father of western medical science, stated about two and a half thousand years ago: "Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food."

Diploma for an ecological gardening: https://youtu.be/adBYR5T_rw8

The allotment association “Ons Buiten”, in Leiden (NL) received the diploma for an ecological gardening



The allotment association “Ons Buiten” was founded on 2 January 1957 and forms with its 420 gardens a green lung between the centre and the outskirts of Leiden.

Introduction

“Ons Buiten” has a Committee Ecological Gardening that stimulates the awareness amongst the gardeners and an ecological development of the garden site in numerous ways. These efforts let to visible results. For example most gardeners changed to an ecological way of maintaining the soil, plants and lay out of their garden. Facilities for birds, insects and mammals can be found in many gar-

dens as well as in the public parts of the park. The increase in biodiversity is visible. They are proud of: wild orchids that appeared spontaneously in at least two gardens, stone marten, green woodpecker, great spotted woodpecker, long-eared owl, gold crest (nested as well), water rail and several king fishers. By now the allotment association “Ons Buiten” has created a solid balance between recreation, education and nature.

The first National Quality Mark for Ecological Gardening was awarded in October 2001 and now again it was prolonged until 2019.

An overview of their activities and achievements

- In 2015 the course ‘The ecological vegetable garden’ given by VELT was organized for the members and each participant received the book “Ecological Gardening for beginners” as a gift.
- In 2014 Fred Weber, beekeeper of the Hortus Botanicus in Leiden, gave a lecture on bees and parts of the documentary ‘More than honey’ were shown and the participating gardeners received seed mixtures for plants/flowers for butterflies and bees as a present.
- A lecture on soil improvement and suitable plant for clay was given. “Ons Buiten” has heavy clay.
- Gardeners received information on the use of ecological sound materials (o.a. biological protection and fertilizers). Volunteers and staff of the Hortus Botanicus in Leiden are involved.
- Safaris are organized to acquaint gardeners and residents with the nature on “Ons Buiten” (birds, creepy crawlies and bats).
- “Ons Buiten” has a garden shop which is open every Saturday and sells ecological sound materials. Gardeners are encouraged to shop here. Soil improvers (sand and manure) can be bought here for low prices as well as seeds and seedlings.
- In the growth- and flower season plants and seed exchanges are organized on a regular base. Shortly a special “exchange” gar-



- den will be opened.
- Volunteers hanged 60 nest boxes in the public parts of the garden park. The nest boxes are made by disabled people.
- Observations of plants and animals are kept and published.
- “Ons Buiten” has three beekeepers and they sell their honey in the garden shop. Part of their bee colonies are placed on the school gardens next to “Ons Buiten”.
- A trail, accessible to everyone, crosses the garden park. Along the trail more and more signs with information on plants and trees will be placed.
- Residents of the Nursing and Care Home Topaz Overrhijn have their own garden, which is looked after by volunteers.
- There is a Ecozone (East) consisting among other things of a toad pool and dead hedge. Expansions (bee hotel etc.) are planned.
- A second Ecozone (West) will be developed. The plans are ready, the implementation has started and a toad pool and reed beds are dug. Pumps on electricity by solar energy will provide the reed beds with water. Other elements will be: bee hotel, nesting for hedge hogs, a dead hedge and a pile of stones.
- Beside these two Ecozones “Ons Buiten” has a separate third toad pool.
- Trimmed branches of individual gardens are collected centrally and are reused for dead hedges and as wood chips.
- Gardeners are informed through the magazine “Buitenpost”. Weekly by e-mail garden notices are sent. The association also has a website and gardeners are active on Facebook.
- This year 40 small neighbour gardens can be used by candidate members and residents so that they can get acquainted with the pleasures of gardening and the delight of growing your own vegetables. The gardens are ready and

the fruit trees and –bushes in the picking garden, that is part of this project, have been planted.

Percentage participating gardeners

The estimation is that about 75 – 80% of the gardeners participate in one or the other way.

History of the Office International du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux 1926 – 2016

Part III Malou Weirich

The development from 1927 till 1947

The first congress took place in Luxembourg in 1927. 14 federations from Germany, Austria, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Finland, France, England, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, and Switzerland took part in this meeting.

The following conclusions were adopted:

- The international congress of allotment holders in Luxembourg acknowledges the numerous moral and material advantages, from which the whole family can benefit, by having put a garden at their disposal.
- It confirms the unanimous intention of its members to put into practice the following motto: “An allotment for everyone, a home for everyone”, as they are convinced that the realization of this double aim will be highly supported by a precise and definitive legislation.
- Therefore, the congress expresses the wish, that the governments of all the nations represented in the congress take the appropriate measures and that the Parliament adopts all the necessary laws in order for local authorities, cooperatives and organisations, created for the realisation of this aim, to be able to easily buy grounds or to be able to easily have them put at their disposal for a permanent use. The aim is that these grounds can be permanently used by reg-

ularly putting plots at the disposal of a manual or intellectual worker, head of family, as counterpart of the payment of a very small and honourable fee.

The work for the Office was so fixed for the coming years. Accordingly the questions that had to be dealt with by the Office and its members over the next years, were as follows:

- Are there national legislations concerning allotments; what is their content?
- Is an acquisition or a long term lease of allotments possible? Are these possibilities supported by legislation?
- Do allotment gardeners get a moral or financial support from the governments?

After the death of Abbé Lemire in 1928, Joseph Goemaere, who had acted for many years as the secretary general, became president of the Office and barrister Fernand Loesch from Luxembourg became secretary general.

The second congress took place in Essen in 1929. It expressed wishes, which were then sent to the Society of Nations.

The London “Daily Herald” said after the Hall Conference in 1930: “The principle of the president of the International “An Allotment for everybody, a Home for everybody” commands admiration from all and must be made the subject of a crusade that

has to be preached everywhere”. According to this statement the Office and the federations battled till 1940 with a very militant work for their rights and for sensitising the world for their concerns.

In 1931 the Office counted already two million affiliated families in Belgium, Germany, England, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Austria, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland and Czechoslovakia.

In Egypt, Denmark, Greece, Latvia, Portugal, Hungary and Spain people sympathised with the ideas of the allotment movement and considered becoming member of the Office.

In 1934 the Office counted five million allotment gardens feeding 22,5 million people.

During the period from 1926 to 1940, the international allotment movement did not only labour for the worker to get a garden, but it also tried to make him owner of his garden and his home. The allotment movement was successful so that the worker could get a loan at favourable conditions. Specific legislations were issued. The national society for small ownership in Belgium was created at the initiative of the allotment gardeners (law dated 1930).

All these efforts were not only carried out on a national level. On the contrary, the Office very actively supported the federations and the never-ending

commitment of president Goemaere has to be underlined.

During the third session of the International Office in Luxembourg on 3rd and 4th August 1930, the Luxembourgish minister for social affairs and for finance Pierre Dupong explained that the allotment organisations were entitled to benefit from the cooperation of the governments. He showed why they were entitled to this cooperation and why it was useful to support the allotment associations.

It was decided to put this statement at the disposal of the federations so that they could show it to their Head of government and that they could work in order to get this support of their governments.

After the renunciation of Italy to organise the congress in 1931, it was organised in Brussels. The members made an in-depth evaluation of the evolution of the allotments in the member federations.

The international organisations existing at that time were contacted. In an open letter from January 25th, 1931 to the Society of Nations Joseph Goemaere wrote: "The International Office of Small Holdings and Allotments is not an association for the cultivation of vegetables and flowers. We are also cultivating a new mentality, we are cultivating the renewal of the working class family by putting land ownership within its reach, we are cultivating a stable peace, a peace within each Nation which will foster international peace We desire to place ourselves under the Aegis of the League of Nations and to ask for the League's protection..... We ask you Mr President respectfully, to place this question on the Agenda for one of your next sittings. We ask you to do this so that Governments will recognise and understand and help our movement, so that the material effects of the flood or unemployment which is the result

of the economic crisis shall be lessened by the help which an allotment can give to a working class family, so that these effects on the morale of the workers shall be lightened by the change which an allotment can bring into a worker's spirit and outlook".

On March 3rd 1932 a meeting between Joseph Goemaere and the representatives of the allotment gardens from Geneva with the International Labour Office in Geneva took place. The Office could learn that it planned to issue a recommendation for the governments in 1940. However, the outbreak of the War prevented this from happening.

The reasons that motivated the contacts with international organisations are very interesting. They are still partially applicable today.

Further congresses took place in Vienna in 1933, in Poznan in 1935 and in Berlin in 1937.

At the occasion of the international congress in Vienna in 1933 the president of the Austrian Republic Wilhelm Miklas informed that the social principles defended by the allotment movement had been inserted in the draft for the new Austrian constitution.

In a resolution it was decided:

"To send a delegation to the Heads of State with the special mission of conferring with them as to the legal and practical means of introducing without delay, a more social distribution of the possession and ownership of land so as to enable every head of a family to work for himself – if he had no more work for other people – and attain the possession in property of a plot of the native soil – where he can wait in peace for an improved general situation".

At the occasion of the 5th international congress in Poznan two resolutions were adopted:

In a first resolution the Congress decided to invite all the leagues to create services of allotment gardens for the youth, either in schools or in associations. He recommended to all the governments to complete the school programmes of the primary and secondary schools as well as schools for workless people with courses of gardening and small animal breeding.

A second decision stipulated to increase the propaganda in the member federations and to make the necessary efforts in order to make the press, radio etc support the allotment movement.

At the beginning of 1939 in a speech concerning the missions of the International Office president Joseph Goemaere underlined that "the programme of the Office aimed at linking the national federations to each other in order to give them the advantage to learn everything that happens around them and accordingly to increase their capacity to work and to make it more anchored.

Because this had already happened (the Office counted 15 affiliated federations in 1939) the allotment movement should now be protected wherever this was not yet so and should develop in those countries where the movement did not yet exist....."

Joseph Goemaere also requested that every year one should organise an allotment day in every member federation. This day should help to increase the range of the movement and to establish it even better in society. Propaganda should be made for the movement and money should be collected to finance allotment garden activities.

A next congress was planned in Luxembourg in 1939, but could no more take place.

The Second World War stopped the work of the International Office as

well as the contacts with the international organisations.

Reconstruction of the Office

After the end of the Second World War, the activities of the Office were restarted in 1946 at the initiative of the French federation. Following the initiative of Mr. Henri Boissard, president of the French federation, a first meeting was organised in Paris in 1946. Baron Moyersoen from Belgium and Mr. Joseph Olinger from Luxembourg took part.

The reconstruction of the Office was then decided on September 20th, 1947 in Luxembourg. In this meeting the federations from France, Belgium, England, the Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland and Luxembourg took part. A little bit later the federations from Germany and Denmark also became member as well as the federation from Sweden.

After the reconstruction of the Office in 1947 it was decided that it was better to have an alternative presidency

because the two important pioneers (Abbé Lemire and Joseph Goemaere) had passed away. It was decided that the international president should always be the acting president of that federation, which was in charge of organising the next international congress.

In 1947 the general secretary of the International Office was chosen among the Luxembourgish candidates, because the general secretariat was in Luxembourg. Aloyse Weirich became secretary general and assumed this function from 1947 till 1987.

After the reconstruction, the Office tried to give to the allotment movement both a greater importance and a new orientation. It was decided “that the allotment garden as it had existed up to now had to be improved both as far as the stability of the ground and its cultivation as well as its equipment were concerned. It should additionally offer the possibility for relaxation, family pleasure,

individual freedom, social and moral support as well as a new contact with nature to the workers”.

According to the wish of its members, the Office, however, adopted a more neutral position. The main actors were the national federations, who tried to protect, maintain and improve what had already been achieved. According to this, the mission of the international Office was to favour contacts, to maintain and renew them. This revealed to be very successful both due to an exchange of practical and legislative data and to discussions of general problems. The members were conscious that their efforts had to be harmonised and that this was an important element of success, even if the organisation of each country had to be respected at all times. They were of the opinion that only the International Office could favour this coordination.

To be followed

France: Father Jules Lemire and the Republic

Hervé Bonnavaud



Father Jules Lemire influenced public and political life during more than 40 years from 1893, year when he was first elected into the House of Parliament until March 7th 1928, date of his death.

He was an exceptional man who had a very great influence at his time. Today nearly nobody speaks anymore about him, except in the town of Hazebrouck and among the allotment gardeners. I refer only to the allotment gardeners, who are member of the French federation. In fact all the others, who are the most numerous (more than 100,000) ignore his name, all he did and all they owe to him.

In the House of Parliament he was seated at the extreme left: this doesn't mean that he had extreme left ideas, but simply that he could not be classified within the traditional political scene.

He very quickly understood the extreme poverty that faced the working class and so he was at the origin of numerous social laws and institutions.

At this time the clergy, at least the High clergy, was not supporting the lower class people but rather those who owned goods i.e. wealthy people. His positions and actions very often brought him the blame and disapproval of his hierarchy, and even of the people of his parish in Hazebrouck.

And this without referring to the big battle at the beginning of the 20th century opposing the State and the Catholic Church concerning the vote of the law dated December 9th, 1905 organising the separation of the churches and the State. This law concerned all the religions, but this was totally unacceptable for the Catholic Church considered as "the eldest daughter of the church". This question enormously divided Catho-

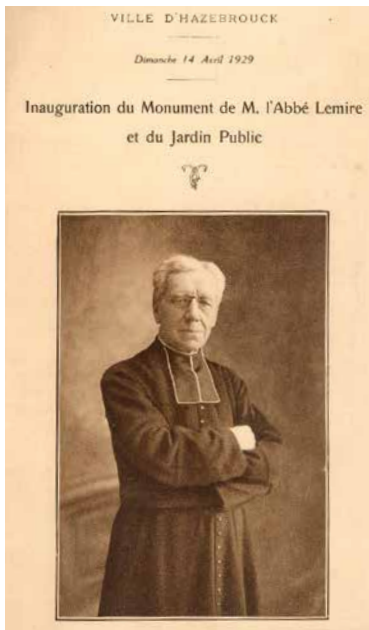
lics and Republicans during several decades. The latter were in favour of the religious neutrality. The battle between the holy Seat and the Republic was violent and without mercy and the consequences can still be felt today. The religious neutrality is still not totally admitted by the Catholic Church.

These facts just aim at describing the environment with which Father Lemire was confronted. Jules Lemire was a fervent catholic, attached to the traditional values of the church and the family. But he was also a liberal and enlightened person.

Together with Count Albert de Mun, Jean Lerolle, Henri Bazire, Martin Saint-Léon and later on Marc Sangnier (1) he participated in a reflexion group of social Catholics called "Le Sillon".

All of them did not share the same ideas. Count Albert de Mun was a





royalist who had followed the Republic against his heart. Father Lemire

himself was a fervent Republican. He stated: "We have to enter into the Republic in order to support all those that have founded the Republic and not in order to chase them from the Republic".

The consequences of this separation were serious because the Catholic Church was rich and its goods were highly desired. Father Jules Lemire invested all his efforts into persuading Aristide Briand (2) for the article 4 of the law to stipulate the creation by the church authorities of cultural associations in order to receive their goods. This measure of common sense was accepted by most of the French bishops, but despite this, part of them violently fought against it. The Vatican forbade then the creation of these associations. Facing the absence of associations, the

State could do nothing else than take charge of the religious buildings and the Catholics shouted that they had been robbed.

This unreasonable behaviour of certain Catholics listening to the Vatican, led to violence in Géry Ghysel, a village within the circumscription of Father Lemire. An inhabitant was killed by the gendarmerie. At his funeral Father Lemire had to be saved from the plebs that threatened him.

This was an extremely difficult experience, but Father Lemire never regretted his decisions as he was persuaded that it was certainly an advantage for the Clergy not to be civil servants anymore and to recover in this way a greater independence in order to accomplish the mission that was their own (3).

(1) Marc Sangnier (Le Sillon 1834 – 1928). He presided the edition of the philosophical journal for a democratic and social christianism "Le Sillon" which is at the origin of a vaster movement for popular education.

2) Aristide Briand, reporter of the law concerning the separation of the churches and the State and later on several times president of the Council of Ministers.

3) Evidence by his secretary Natalis Dumais

Sources: Bulletin no. 31 – January 2016 of the association for the memory of Father Lemire.

Sweden: Services offered to their members by the Swedish allotment garden federation

To be or not to bee in the city

Ulrica Otterling

Secretary General of the Swedish Allotment Society



There is a great interest among people in Sweden to grow their own organic vegetables and allotment gardens are in high demand. At the same time, very few new allotment areas are being created. Instead prices are rising and there are allotment areas that face the threat of being abolished due to city development. To make sure that allotment gardens can compete for space in the future cities, the Swedish Allotment Soci-

eties must make city planners and decision makers aware about all the benefits that our gardens bring to society.

In Sweden, it is easier to make certified organic honey in the middle of Stockholm, than to make honey in the countryside that meets the same standards. This is possible because in Stockholm the bees live and thrive in the allotment gardens in the middle

of the city, gardens where things to great extent are grown in an organic way. This is an excellent example of how allotment gardens bring biodiversity to the city.

The Swedish Allotment Society has approximately 235 member associations with about 24.000 allotment holders. There are two main types of allotments in Sweden; plots with small houses where the allotment

holders are permitted to stay during the summer months. Among our members they are about 17.000. The other main type are smaller plots, usually about 100 square meters, where only equipment boxes or possibly small sheds are allowed. There are about 7.000 of these in the Swedish Allotment Society.

Our member associations are spread all over Sweden, from the north to the south, but there is a high concentration around our three largest cities; Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö. The associations in the northern parts open in late April and close by the end of September when the water supply needs to be turned off because winter is arriving. This gives them a substantially shorter season than the associations in the south of Sweden and, for that matter, the rest of Europe.

Allotments are in high demand in Sweden today, especially in the larger cities. There is a great interest in growing your own vegetables and to have a healthy life style. People not only want to buy organic food; they want to grow their own organic vegetables. Due to this, more and more people become interested in allotment gardens and other types of urban gardening.



A consequence that follows this interest is that prices of allotment gardens are increasing. Even though almost all allotments are on leased land, the prices for an allotment garden with a small house (20-40 square meters) in sought after locations (city central or close to the sea), can cost more than a million SEK (about 100.000 euro). In Stockholm where there is a controlled market, you might have to queue for up to 7-15 years to buy an allotment with a house, but in some areas the waiting time is 25 years! The positive side of the controlled market in Stockholm is that the prices are kept low, about 150.000 SEK (about 15.000 euro).

To sum it all up, the good news is that there is a great demand for allotment gardens in Sweden. The downside is that new areas are rarely created, despite this increased interest. On the contrary, news keep appearing about allotment areas under threat to be abolished due to city development.

In June 2016, the city planners of Helsingborg in the south of Sweden published a plan to abolish 13 out of 16 allotment areas on council land and replace them with apartment buildings, daycare centers etc. The city planners see allotment land as

available and seem unaware of all the benefits that allotment gardens bring to society. From a historical perspective, this desire to abolish allotment areas due to the need to build more houses and make the cities denser, seem to be something that reoccur over time, and now is such a time.

Green areas in the city will be a scarce resource in the cities of the future and the competition for space will be fierce. City planners in Stockholm talk about the importance of multifunctional green spaces, spaces that can be used to the benefit of many. In this perspective, the opinion is voiced that allotment gardens as green areas benefit only the allotment holders and that this is a too small group compared to public demand for parks and housing projects.

To better show all the great things that allotment gardens bring will be one of the Swedish Allotment Society's greatest challenges ahead. What can be more multifunctional than an allotment garden where you along with growing vegetables, fruit and flowers, improve both your physical and mental health by working in the garden, meet other people and improve biodiversity. Allotment gardens also offer fresh air and a refuge from





the noise in the city and by maintaining the soil, they secure a base for food security. Many people will also agree that it is much more interesting and more beautiful to stroll through an allotment garden area, than to take a walk in a regular park that mainly contains vast lawns and trees.

In a time of an increasing population, it is easy to understand the demand for more houses. But let's hope that the city planners still remember that along with houses, we need places where we can live, breathe and thrive and grow food and flowers. Allotment gardens need to be part of the future cities. And the bees need somewhere to be too.

A membership in the Swedish Allotment Society includes:

- Gardening advice focused on organic gardening. Classes and lectures about garden related subjects.
- Financial contributions to associations to their educational activities regarding gardening or the management of the associations.
- A program where an association can obtain an ecological certificate for practicing organic growing, and thus fulfill a number of environmental requirements.
- Advice regarding: Lease contracts and legal issues connected to such matters, negotiations, questions regarding statutes and other

association matters etc.

- Classes about management of associations for the boards of the member associations.
- A basic insurance for the allotment associations.
- Discounts on seeds, plants, paint, insurance for allotment houses etc.
- A possibility for the associations to lend money to favorable terms for investments in general areas, such as fences, a compost central, a house for meetings.
- The Allotment Garden, the Swedish Allotment Society's magazine with 4 issues per year.
- We also like to tell our members that by joining our Society they contribute to the further development of the allotment movement!



France: Hervé Chabert cultivates his plot in Maisons-Alfort (Val de Marne, France) by applying the rules of permaculture

Malvina Beauclair



Presentation of a person caring for his environment

Hervé Chabert is not only an extraordinary gardener but above all a person with a very high ecological conscience. He is particularly worried about the question concerning the use of pesticides by the conventional agriculture causing an increasing disappearance of bees. He is very interested in the preservation of old seed varieties by „La Fraternité Ouvrière“, a Belgian organisation. The latter is defending and cultivating seeds according to the rules of permaculture and has a seed bank of approximately 5,450 seed varieties. He is also



inspired by people, like for example, Pierre Rabhi or Vandana Shiva, famous personalities fighting for the preservation of the environment.

An astonishing garden plot

I met Hervé Chabert on the allotment site “Park Le Vert de Maisons“ in Maisons-Alfort on Wednesday, April 13th. He is responsible for this site and has a plot there. We were lucky. It was very nice weather and I could see some gardeners that came to take advantage of the first sunshine.

Hervé Chabert invited me to visit the site. I found nice, large, well cultivat-

ed and looked after plots. His plot of 80 sqm is different from all the others. At a first glance it looks a little bit like a mad garden with an enormous excess of plants. Every space is occupied, with only very small paths that allow us to walk through this green area full of flowers in this season. Which astonishes me most at a first glance are the small signs among the abundant vegetables. He explains that his garden provokes astonishment and questions among his colleagues. Many think that his garden is a vegetable jungle without any organisation or even think that it is a badly looked after garden. These signs help him to explain the functioning of his plot, what he cultivates and to prove to other gardeners cultivating according to the traditional manner (in rows) that there exist other ways to cultivate a vegetable garden.

Hervé Chabert gardens according to the rules of permaculture. He does not cultivate in rows, but on the contrary he mixes the plants all together so that you find, for example, permanent cabbage on the four corners of his plot as well as corn salad and wild garlic all over the plot. He explains to me that the first advantage not to cultivate in rows is that this



will make it more difficult for insects, snails or slugs to eat all the plants of the same family. Last year one of his permanent cabbages was badly attacked, but this year it is another cabbage. The cabbages are very remote one from the other and between them there are many varieties of other vegetables, flowers and condiments, which make it very difficult for slugs who really like cabbage. In this way, even if one of the cabbages is attacked, it is nearly certain that all the others remain untouched, because the slugs just attack one single cabbage. In addition, cabbages, that have been attacked, will recover and will even grow much better as soon as their guests have been fed.

Hervé Chabert tells me that at the beginning he tried to grow classic crops like lettuces, tomatoes and others but that according to him they are too fragile. He prefers to concentrate on perpetual cultures that are more robust and which he can harvest all year long like for example Doubleton cabbage, wild garlic, pimpernels and rhubarb. Corn salad and rocket also grow very well without any help. Of course he also cultivates some tomatoes, apples and pears, but his great passions are condiments and medicinal plants.

He doesn't use pesticides and swears on the beneficial effects of compost and especially compost tea*. The soil is essential for him. If you don't care for your soil, if you don't give it as much as you take out of it, all the products of the world cannot help, nothing will grow from it. A good soil, good varieties adapted to the climate of the Parisian region, much attention and much patience that is the good recipe for a good vegetable garden. He knows that his unconventional methods do not convince everybody, especially his neighbouring gardeners, but he hopes that by explaining he can make customs evolve in the vegetable gardens around him or at least make the gardeners accept that there is not only one single way of cultivating a vegetable garden.

A garden on his balcony

Even before he got a plot on the allotment site of „Vert de Maisons“ he started cultivating on his balcony in 2009. His first experiences were not all very successful, but he learned step by step from his errors by experimenting.

He started by planting some flower boxes with geraniums, herbs and medicinal plants. He had a compost-er with worms in order to get all the

good nutrients that are necessary to add to the soil and so to mix it with the soil of his garden. Then he ordered tables for cultivating his plants from Spain, so enabling him to create a real vegetable garden off the ground on his 10 sqm large balcony, where he cultivates radishes, lettuce, Lollo Rossa, spinach “Matador” and mangold.

All the steps to create his vegetable garden are shown year by year on his internet site <http://www.unpotagerbiosurmonbalcon.fr/> which he created with the help of a friend. On his homepage he describes his successes, but also his failures as well as the solutions he applied to solve the problem. He adds photos to underline his descriptions. His internet site is a real help for all those who wish to create a vegetable garden on their balcony. Hervé Chabert helps you to learn how you can get your own seeds, your own seedlings, how to prepare your balcony, how to organize it, how to recycle your waste and how to choose the appropriate varieties to cultivate.

On this Wednesday April 13th after having discovered his garden plot, I had the chance to also discover this famous balcony of which I had already heard so many positive things. In fact this balcony is perfectly organized; the seeds in growth have even invaded his lounge as far as the most fragile of them are concerned. In 2015 he had more than a hundred varieties of plants on only 10 sqm.

Hervé Chabert is a real gardener and handyman, who finds solutions for every problem that occurs and who creates everything he needs. He created not only a system to water his plants but also to nourish the soil with for example a system that allowed him to get compost tea*. Having a vegetable garden on his balcony is a means for him to reconnect himself with life and with all life has as spontaneous and creative elements.



***Compost tea**

Compost tea is a mixture of water and compost. The problem of the tap water with which we water our plants on the balcony is that this water is rich in chlorine and this is problematic for the cultivation. Hervé Chabert has therefore created a system allowing to evacuate chlorine from the water with a simple waste bin and an aquarium bubbler (not consuming much electricity). In order to discover this system I invite you to click on the following link http://www.unpotager-biosurmonbalcon.fr/?page_id=699.

The compost tea will allow you to water your plants and to enrich your soil at the same time at very low cost.

Belgium: The Tuinhier not-for-profit organisation launches an environmental quality mark for allotment gardens

Noël Ghesquière



Introduction

The allotment movement since many years invests much effort for a nature friendly gardening by its members.

Soil analyses, advice for fertilisation, gardening advice, courses and diplomas are only a few of the many services offered by the federations and associations in this area.

In Sweden the decision to create an Environmental Certification of allotment garden sites was taken in 1999 and the certificate was awarded for the first time in 2005.

In the Netherlands associations can receive a national ecological quality mark since 2000.

Now in Belgium an ecological quality mark for the allotment gardens has also been created.

Malou Weirich

Quality mark

Tuinhier, the largest allotment garden federation in Flanders, is launching an environmental quality mark for allotment gardens. As a gardening federation, founded in 1896, we know very well that gardening is not an easy task. The trend towards environmentally-friendly work does not make gardening any easier, as the project associate, Daan Van de Vijver, said. This is why the Tuinhier NFPO wants to reward gardeners who look after their gardens together in a healthy and environmental-

ly friendly way. The environmental quality mark is not just a reward, but also a way to increase diversity and respect for nature in allotment gardens, to modernise older allotment gardens and to reduce the use of pesticides by amateur gardeners.

Protecting nature and life in nature are very current topics at the moment. Consumers' growing awareness of the environment is the main reason for this. Starting from this trend, Tuinhier had the idea to launch an environmental quality mark for allotment gardens and all of the social variances such as "communal gardening". This quality mark is new for our country and serves primarily to reward our gardeners, who spend day after day looking after the garden together so that it is healthy and environmentally friendly. It is a pleasure to give an award to these gardeners, as Daan Van de Vijver said. This quality mark must be considered a vote of appreciation. For Tuinhier there are no winners or losers, as every effort counts. The largest allotment garden federation is particularly targeting awareness and clarity over the use of pesticides. Environmentally friendly gardening is certainly not easy, but it is a challenge to use nature in such a way that chemistry and physic operations become redundant. The use of pesticides in allotment gardens does not fall within the field of application



will be inspected across four criteria: plans, management, preparation and education. For each of these four evaluation criteria you can achieve one star, explains Van de Vijver. Gardeners still using pesticides will not receive a star for management, but can still receive the other three stars over the two years of the project. The panel will visit each allotment garden site to make a list of the opportunities to contribute towards biodiversity and a more natural way of managing the site.

of the general rules (stipulating 0% of pesticides for communal grounds and roadsides for example), but the prescribed “minimal usage” (for example for grounds accessible to the public in general) must be observed. This is a grey area that in future will probably become “no pesticides”. Tuinhier especially wants to contribute to reducing the use of pesticides. In our strategic plan we stipulate that the organisation wants to promote sustainable and natural gardening. We don't limit our activities to environmentally friendly gardening but we see it in a wider context, said Van de Vijver. Given that our federation has 25,000 member gardeners, Tuinhier's awareness drive can certainly make a difference.

To give more impact to this quality mark, Tuinhier has formed a panel of people who work in the environment and gardening sector. Together with Tuinhier, they will give advice and professional support to allotment gardens who want to receive a quality mark. The allotment gardens

Members of the allotment garden associations who aspire to obtain the quality mark will be fully trained on environmentally friendly gardening via evening seminars. Daan Van de Vijver promises professional support. It will not be done alone, but with help of the members of the panel. At the end of the two year transformation period, the panel will visit the site again. Depending on the progress made, the members will receive between one and four stars. Or no stars. But this is unlikely, given the intensive support from Tuinhier. Thanks to the knowledge they have acquired, the gardeners will have many ways to keep their quality mark through biyearly evaluations.

The first inspection took place on the 2nd of July 2016 in the Slotenkouter allotment garden site in Sint-Amandsberg (West Flanders). The Flemish Minister for the Environment, Joke Schauvliege, marked the start of the project. Meanwhile, there is already a second site in Peer (Limburg) that wants to take up the challenge.



All pictures are from the allotment site „Slotenkouter“



Switzerland: The garden of the HEKS (relief organisation of the Swiss protestant churches) for asylum seekers in Basel

Werner Fricker

A successful idea for the past 10 years

The visitors of the anniversary celebration „10 years HEKS-allotments“ - including the photo exhibition - could see and feel how much effort and engagement the members of this organisation invest in the idea of giving allotments to asylum seekers. HEKS is responsible for the plots and puts them at the disposal of refugee families. The latter clearly cultivate the gardens with great pleasure and are extremely proud when their work is fruitful i.e. respectively yields nice vegetables. While working, they like getting advice from the members of

the HEKS. Many tried to get vegetables from their own country in order to offer them to their friends. Speaking of their friends does not only mean people originating from the same country, but all those gardeners with whom they have contacts. This is, however, not very easy when asylum seekers have only lived in Switzerland for a short time. Some of them have made a lot of progress very rapidly and are proud of this. So for example Matin Haidarzade from Af-

ghanistan, who is following a training course as FBU technician. FBU means a technician for the maintenance of firms i.e. caretaker in multi flat houses, industrial or office premises. They learn the basic no-



The friendly Matin Haidarzade from Afghanistan is an example of a successful integration



Three young ladies



Mustafa Veli from Turkey



A photo from the photo exhibition



Maryam and daughter Sara from Iran

tions of different manual and technical skills. Matin does not only speak German, but also the Basel dialect (Baseldytsch) and he could get integrated in a very short time. He is a great support for his parents, especially as his father is in bad health.

The taking over of gardens by the HEKS is a success story, because many refugees could so get an allotment plot on an allotment garden site in Basel. They can now cultivate these plots, find some peace there and can meet with their friends. For those who cultivate a garden this means a great step towards integration. We must probably not be worried that in these cases something will go wrong. Or, are those asylum seekers who take care of a garden, simply the more open people and the people who are thankful that they can stay in Switzerland?

As for example Maryam from Iran with her bright and curious little daughter Sara. No person from Iran would leave his wonderful country if he could live there without any fear. Maryam and her husband came to Switzerland a few years ago. Sara goes to primary school and of course speaks the Basel dialect. Mustafa Veli from Turkey has already worked for six years on the allotment site Dreispitz. Before that he spent three years in Reinach. He is very proud of his garden and the plants from his country he cultivates there.

The HEKS project "New gardens" has its origin in a demand from the Otto Erich Heynau foundation and was developed by Astrid Geistert from the HEKS regional office for both Basel regions. The program is financially supported by the Otto Erich Heynau foundation, the Ernst

Göhner foundation, the two Basel regions and Reinach and Oberwil. The project started with 9 refugee women and works today with 70 allotment gardeners as the program leader Christine Giustizieri could acknowledge with great pleasure. The participants, in addition to the food contributions made by the "Restaurant du Coeur", produced typical meals from their countries of origin and have so contributed to the fine meal at the occasion of the anniversary celebration.

Netherlands: New project: The National Garden Experiment

In September 2016, AVVN launched a new project entitled the National Garden Experiment (Nationale Proeftuin). The project involves a non-commercial, generally accessible seed exchange, on the website www.denationaleproeftuin.nl, via which garden enthusiasts can offer and obtain plant seeds, free of charge. Via the National Garden Experiment, we aim to help promote biodiversity in gardens.

The National Garden Experiment was originally established as a foundation by idealists from the world of science, art and culture. On a number of occasions during the early years of this millennium, together with the foundation, we organised several publicity-based and educational activities focusing on the importance of improving the possibilities for spreading various common and less common varieties of (wild) flowers, garden plants, vegetables and fruits, to improve the likelihood of their continued survival.

As time went by, the foundation ceased its operations, with the exception of the online seed exchange. When even this activity became increasingly dormant and was faced with the threat of permanently going off air, the foundation asked us to take over the website.

The answer was self-evident. Biodiversity ensures a healthy natural system and allotment gardeners are the ideal partners to strengthen biodiversity by exchanging seeds. For this

digital marketplace, we developed a new website which is fully open to the public; in addition to allotment gardeners, anyone with a front garden, back garden or balcony can join in.

Promoting biodiversity is essential in the face of the decline in genetic plant variety. Due to large-scale agriculture and the food processing industry, more than 90% of calorie intake today is provided by just 30 crops. Variation between crop varieties is also declining. Nonetheless, it is essential that traditional diversity be maintained. We should give nature more space to develop, by preserving and extending our green heritage. Via the National Garden Experiment, we can inspire garden enthusiasts to experiment. It doesn't take much; even a flower tray is enough.

There are a number of rules of play. Seeds must not be sold via the website; only exchanged or given away. Seeds must all originate from the participant's own crop or own garden. To prevent the undesirable spread of diseases, only healthy material must be offered.

Anyone offering seeds or plant material simply places their own advertisement on the website. We encourage them to also give tips on the plant's needs such as location and soil, and the plant's characteristics such as colour, height and flowering season. Information about the added natural value of the plant, for example whether it attracts butterflies or bees, is also useful.



Anyone visiting the site and interested in a particular seed simply sends an envelope containing a stamped and addressed reply envelope to the provider, stating the seeds they wish to receive. By bringing supply and demand together in this way, we hope to boost the vitality of nature in the Netherlands and make the world an even prettier place.

News from the federations

A. NATIONAL MEETINGS

a) Austria

Training course for surveyors,

Basic course for allotment gardeners on an ecological gardening

b) Denmark

A seminar to develop the federation

Study session of the International Office

c) Finland

March 2017: Participation in the "PuutarhaSuomi 100" (Garden Finland 100) event. The event is part of the programme for the centenary of Finland's independence in 2017.

5th – 6th August 2017: National Congress in the city of Tampere

d) France

Meeting of the regional ambassadors

Meeting of the council members of the allotments around Paris

Meeting of the people responsible for the allotment sites around Paris

Educative meeting: kitchen garden cultivated in a natural way

e) Germany

24th - 26th March, 2017 Bremen

Management

Subject: Competitions – their preparation and execution explained by the example of the federal competition 2018

21st – 23rd April, 2017 Goslar

Public relation work

Subject: To accompany and to advertise competitions by the media

18th – 19th May, 2017

4. Congress Berlin

Subject: City, green, allotments

20th May 2017

Day of the garden Berlin

16th – 18th June, 2017 Duisburg

Gardening advice I

Subject: To garden in a sustainable manner- ecological fruit growing on the allotment

30th June – 02nd July, 2017 Gersfeld

Legal matters I

Subject: Changing of a leaseholder - a challenge for the associations and the landlords

22nd- 24th September, 2017 Cas-trop-Rauxel

Gardening advice II

Subject: To garden in a sustainable manner – step by step towards an own herb garden

13th – 15th October, 2017 Schwerin

Environment

Subject: Ecosystems – the reciprocal effects between allotment sites and neighbourhood

27th - 29th October, 2017 Riesa

Legal matters II

Subject: The eternal conflict point: The use as allotment. Mediation as a possible means to solve these conflicts.

For more information:

on seminars under:

www.kleingarten-bund.de/veranstaltungen/bdg_seminare/uebersicht_2016_

on events under:

www.kleingarten-bund.de/der_bdg_informiert_news

f) Japan

3 seminars (February, June, October): on urban allotment gardens in Europe and Japan

The 45th anniversary event of Chigusadai Gardening Circle

g) Luxembourg

9th April 2017: National congress in Diekirch

h) Sweden

6th – 9th April 2017: Stockholm/ Älvsjö: Participation in the Nordiska Trädgårdar/Nordic Gardens

12th – 13th August 2017: Uppsala: 30th congress of the Swedish Allotment Society

Gothenburg: Participation in the yearly Swedish Book Fair

i) Switzerland

20th May 2017: St. Gallen. General assembly

B. DOCUMENTS

a) Austria

Film concerning the 100 years of existence of the Austrian allotment federation

Recording of the speeches at the occasion of the international congress in Vienna

b) Finland

The magazine Siirtolapuutarha-lehti published by the federation is available on-line (with a one issue delay) from issue 1/2016 onwards. (<https://issuu.com/siirtolapuutarha-lehti>).

c) France

Internal regulations for associations, local committees and allotments around Paris.

Basic document for new allotments around Paris.

d) Germany

DER FACHBERATER, Fachzeitschrift für das Kleingartenwesen, für Grünpolitik und Umweltschutz (Magazine for the allotments, green policy and the environment protection)

“Grüne Schriftenreihe” documents of the seminars organised by the German federation, 6 issues per year

Subjects to be downloaded under:
www.kleingarten-bund.de/service/publikationen

Weekly plant portrait on Internet under:
unter www.kleingarten-bund.de/praxis/gartenpraxis/zettelkasten

Monthly tip for the garden on Internet under:

www.kleingarten-bund.de/praxis/gartenpraxis/gartentipp

e) Luxembourg

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

Pocket booklet: Gaart & Heem (Garden & Home)

f) Netherlands

Launching of a new website: www.denationaleproeftuin.nl

g) Switzerland

Flyer: pests in the soil and fight against them.

C. USEFUL INFORMATION

a) Austria

Continuation of the study concerning biodiversity in the allotment gardens in cooperation with the University for Soil Culture (BOKU), Vienna

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