



# Hyphen 64

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# Foreword

Malou Weirich,

Secretary General Office International



*Secretary General  
Office International  
du Coin de Terre et des Jardins  
Familiaux a. s. b. l.*

In April / May 1988 the first issue of the Hyphen, our international magazine was published. It was first issued by the Office, then thanks to the help of a federation and finally turned into a professional publication. Since already thirty years, the Hyphen has been spreading news from the Office and the federations, as well as information, on a regular basis – first twice than three times a year. It also enables the federations to present themselves and their projects, deals with problems and gives suggestions.

Recently it was decided to issue a special Hyphen from time to time i. e. a Hyphen dealing with one single subject and enabling the greatest number of federations to present their views. In your hands today, you have the first special Hyphen, dealing with the subject: "Urban gardening".

For the last few years people have been showing more and more interest in a healthy environment, healthy food and socializing with other people. New forms of gardens are appearing in the cities along the roads, on brown fields, etc., all in addition to our allotments.

A discussion, a schematization between old and new took place: "These new forms are innovative, allotments are outdated". "These new forms have to be supported, the allotments don't seem worth of being supported anymore". "The first attract new and young people and the latter don't". Is this really so? Or was the Luxembourgish minister for agriculture Fernand ET-GEN right when he said in 2017 at the occasion of the Luxembourgish allotment congress: "Urban Gardening: there's a difference in packaging, but not in content". Or has the GALK (Gartenamtsleiterkonferenz, Conference of the directors of the division for parks and gardens) recognized the many folded reality when stating:

"Urban gardening and allotments do not compete with each other. On the contrary, they complete each other as the goals of urban gardening are in large parts identical to the goals of allotments".

In this issue the federations show how they react in the context of urban gardening: cooperation, realisation of projects, communication etc.

We have to make our vision of allotment gardening as form and part of urban gardening known; stimulate, defend and protect it for tomorrow. We need a strategy. We pass on a lot of value and experience to our members, but in the competitive world of today we have no alienable right to exist. Every day we have to fight again for this right to exist. We have to take the new needs of our members and society into consideration. We have to put our strategy into practice in order to reach our goals.

Yes, "we are urban gardening" as stated Werner Heidemann. Let us act accordingly and communicate our values towards the exterior.

This Hyphen will give you some ideas.

I wish you much pleasure while reading this issue.

# Trend „Urban Gardening“ – new impulses for allotment gardens, too?

Runrid Fox-Kämper

Allotment gardens have been making a major contribution to providing the urban population with food for the last two centuries; their additional value in relation to experience of nature, health of the population, leisure activities, social togetherness, species protection and biodiversity, furthermore their contribution to adjusting to climate change wins recognition in society.

In parallel to this in many countries institutionalised form of urban gardening, in many places different forms of urban gardening developed and are still developing, for example community gardens, intercultural gardens, self-harvest gardens, rooftop gardens or the so-called Guerilla gardening.

This article will concentrate on community gardens. First of all, it will describe this relatively new phenomenon as far as its development and overall conditions are concerned. Afterwards it will then be placed into the context of the allotment movement in order to highlight similarities and differences. Considering current challenges like for example development pressure on one hand and vacancies on the other hand this contribution will finally try to find out, how far allotment associations can take advantage of concepts and ideas inherent in the community garden movement.

## Community gardens as a new form of usage of urban brownfields

The phenomenon “community garden” is not really new. In 1973 Liz Christy already founded the first community garden, namely “Houston Bowery Community Garden”, in New

York on a neglected fallow property. It continues to exist until today under the name of “Liz Christy Community Garden”. This one and many other community gardens were a reaction to the fuel crisis followed by the financial crisis, that showed in New York’s urban area through greyfields on the one hand and neglect of the public area because of the austerity policy of the city on the other hand. The use of fallow for the joint cultivation of food was above all a political statement. It was about “a conscious reclaim of the commons, (...) the restoring of community ownership”(Meyer-Renschhausen 2004: 146). Thus, reference was made to the commons existing in Europe until the onset of industrialisation in each village, which could be used jointly by all inhabitants to cultivate food or raise cattle. Not all community gardens that have emerged to date are politically motivated, often simply interested parties come together to “shape their environment together and cultivate organic food”(Appel et al. 2011: 34).

A universal definition of community gardens does not yet exist; in scientific discourse, one always falls back on a proposal, according to which “community gardens jointly and through voluntary engagement created and run gardens, green spaces and parks with focus on the the general public”.(Rosol 2006: 7). The definition emphasises a diversity of possible spatial contexts and appearance, as well as the voluntary, communal and public-oriented establishment and maintenance of the gardens. A more precise characterisation is hardly possible due to the variety of possi-

ble forms of the types of community gardens. Thus, to name only one characteristic, e. g. gardens which are managed collectively and those with individual flowerbeds (20 to 50 m<sup>2</sup>), which are individually used by group members (Costa et al., 2016: 206ff).

In contrast to the in many countries in terms of planning right protected long-term allotment gardens, community gardens are usually not covered by planning regulations, since they are frequently realised as temporary interim utilisation on site land. Thereby they are not a part of green infrastructures, despite the fact that they have comparable functions to those of allotment gardens. Given the growth pressure, especially in large cities, community garden initiatives often have to expect a non-continuation of their usage agreement, as the following example illustrates.

Founded in 2012 in Aachen, the Hirschgrün Community Garden is located on the outskirts of the town, which has now been rented as a registered association and has been leased in an annually renewable lease agreement. The garden is open to all interested parties, especially the neighbourhood, is a place of learning and a place to meet.

The property is located between a dog meadow and a small neighbourhood park with a playground, which are the only green areas in a densely populated neighbourhood (Fig. 2). For some time, the city has been pursuing plans to upgrade the park and expand it by the integration of the dog meadow and the community garden.

Nevertheless, the community garden should be able to remain at the site, and the initiative was encouraged to create a public path through the garden. Recently, however, opinions have been voiced by some council parties calling for a shift of the garden to design the park more freely.

Against the described background of their lack of institutionalisation, reliable data on the number of community gardens created in Europe are only available to some extent. For Germany, the foundation community „an-stiftung & ertomis“ lists 619 community gardens (undated) on its website, and the Federation of City Farms & Community Gardens reports on more than 1,000 community gardens in the UK (CFCFCG, undated). The figures show that community gardens are by no means a marginal phenomenon of urban gardening.



Community garden HirschGrün, Aachen, Germany



Site plan of the Community garden HirschGrün, Aachen, Germany. Source: Runrid Fox-Kämper

### Parallels to the history of development of the allotment garden movement

The emergence of community gardens as a reaction to societal challenges culminating in critical developments in cities to some extent repeats the emergence of the allotment movement in European cities, which is linked historically to social upheaval and, above all, to its economic consequences (for a detailed presentation of the history of the allotment garden, see Keshavarz & Bell 2016). The roots of the allotment garden movement go back to the middle of the 19th century, when allotment gardens emerged as a response to the poor living and care conditions of the massively growing urban population in European cities during the industrialisation. During the two world wars and in the global economic crisis of the 1920s, allotment gardens assumed a central importance for supplying the urban population in times of food shortages. In the English-speaking area (USA and Great Britain) a proper movement emerged during this time with the so-called “Victory Gardens”(Figure 3), which should compensate for the supply shortages created by the war on the “Heimatfront”(Hope /Ellis 2009). It was not without reason that in Germany and throughout Europe during this time, most of the allotment garden sites (Fig. 4), which are still to be found today, evolved with sizes of individual garden plots of up to 600 m².

After the Second World War, in the western part of Europe, allotment gardens lost their elementary importance, because food could now be purchased cheaply and comfortably in supermarkets. They increasingly turned to places of leisure. In the socialist countries of Eastern Europe, however, until the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989, they served on a large scale for self-supply.

Up to now, in a European comparison, relative to their population, most of the allotment gardens are located in



Poster „Your Victory Garden counts more than ever!“ Source: Library of Congress



Typical allotment garden in Aachen, Germany, founded 1920. Photo: Runrid Fox-Kämper

Poland, but again they are being used primarily as leisure gardens (Figure 5). In some countries (such as Latvia), many of these gardens are now threatened by vacancy and /or abandoned in favor of urban development projects.

The increase in the significance of productive urban greens in times of crises is still to be seen today in the Rustbelt of the USA, but also in a European context around the Mediterranean sea. In many cities of Greece, Portugal, Spain or Cyprus, where urban gardening has not had a tradition until recently, community or allotment gardens have emerged over the past ten years, often in response to the re-





*Allotment garden plot in Poznań.*

cent economic crisis of 2008, that affected the economic conditions of the population of these countries (Figure 6). In contrast to the times of industrialisation, this does not seem to be a question of the cultivation of essential food. Explorations on the motivation of the gardeners on an allotment site in the surroundings of Athens, founded in 2012 (Anthopoulou 2016) show, for example, that the gardeners place their first priority on their physical and mental health (“healthier and more conscious eating” movement in the fresh air”) or the special life situation of often unemployed gardeners (“developing a local identity”, “making something meaningful”, “ways out of isolation”). This study confirms the assumption that the motivation for urban gardening in a European context is less based on a forced self-sufficiency, than above all on the desire for a healthy lifestyle and participation. Clearly, there are parallels between

*Kipos3-community garden with single flowerbeds in Thessaloniki*



gardeners of this “new type” and classic allotment gardeners.

To sum it up, it can be stated that, despite the manifold and different manifestations of both forms of urban gardening, community gardens and allotment gardens also have some things in common. These include the interest of the urban population in the joint experience of nature, the conscious handling of food or just the joy of growing their own food and a joy in gardening, as well as the desire to create or preserve green areas that provide space for a casual, collaborative together. Differences exist, in particular, in planning recognition, which in many countries fundamentally protects allotments against changes, while community gardens are often used temporary on public or private land. The degree of institutionalisation within the associations or initiatives is also different: while allotment gardens are usually organised as associations, which by statute partially regulate the use of the plots on the basis of the national regulations existing in many countries, community garden initiatives are initially voluntary mergers of like-minded people who jointly negotiate the rules in the community garden and only become an association in the course of time, if at all. Further differences refer to the size and the management of the area used.

### Using new chances

There are around 3 million allotment gardens in Europe (Fox-Kämper et al., 2015: 24). Waiting lists in many large cities prove that in many places allotment gardens are becoming increasingly popular. This shouldn't cover up that certain regions such as Eastern Germany, the Baltic States or France have a certain degree of vacancy. For example, a study on the situation of allotment gardens for Germany shows a vacancy of up to 12% of the garden plots (BMVBS 2013: 19) in some federal states such as Saxony-Anhalt. The reasons for this are diverse. High vacancy rates correlate, e. g. in East-

ern Germany with a very high concentration of allotment gardens. While in Western Germany there are 1.8 gardens per 100 inhabitants, in Eastern Germany there are 6.4 gardens per 100 inhabitants (ibid.: 21). Demographic change with the phenomenon of the aging of the population also favors the emergence of vacancies. For example, 60% of the federations and associations of the named study reports that the average age of the gardeners is 60 years and above and has also risen in recent years. A generational change is therefore still to be expected in many allotment garden sites and must be successful if vacancies are to be avoided in the future. In addition to these structural reasons, there are also location-related or urban-development reasons. In particular, vacancies seem to be concentrated on peripheral or rural located allotment garden sites, which are far from demand groups and away from public transport, and those affected by traffic noise or else. Conversely, allotment garden sites in large cities and in an integrated location often have waiting lists.

In view of the regional vacancies in allotment gardens areas on one hand and pressure from demand on the other, the question arises as to which extent the trend of urban gardening can also be used for classical allotment garden areas. First of all, I would like to investigate the question of whether allotment garden sites can attract new usergroups by coming up with new concepts and that vacancy can be avoided that way. In addition to that I will present a few examples.

Since the mid-1970s, the French federation of allotment gardens (Fédération Nationale des Jardins Familiaux et Collectif – FNJFC) has been trying to counter the constantly decreasing number of allotment gardeners in France. First of all, it was about adapting the attractiveness of the existing garden facilities to the needs of today's families and their ideas of life.

These included the creation of playgrounds, barbecue facilities, rooms for celebrations, a more careful integration into the landscape, as well as the reduction of the plot size from an average of 600 m<sup>2</sup> to an easy-to-manage 250 m<sup>2</sup> (Bonnaud & Pourias 2015). From the mid-1990s onwards, the federation went a step further: in order to attract new beneficiaries, they developed various concepts such as the “Jardins en pieds d’immeubles”(gardens at the foot of a building). In co-operation with housing associations tenants are offered about 50 m<sup>2</sup> garden plots in buffer strips of social housing blocks. Half-public paths for the neighbourhood allow all residents to participate. In the so far implemented projects, the allotment gardens have significantly improved their image and that of the entire residential area. Furthermore, community gardens with individual flowerbeds have been implemented on previously unused roof tops, and an offer of elevated, accessible flowerbeds for people with physical limitations has been developed within existing garden facilities. According to the experience of the federation, the new, partly very small plots are rather advantageous, as the newly won gardeners are primarily interested in social co-operation and exchange with others (ibid.).

In some large cities in Germany (such as Hamburg, Hanover, Munich), new paths are also being pursued, i. e. gaining experience with the creation of community plots and densification of stock, especially where the demand was exceeding the offer. That way, in Hamburg not only schools or kindergardens, but also groups of like-minded people can jointly manage an allotment garden plot. Conversely, plots could also be shared in order to offer gardens to families or small groups who want to manage only a small plot because of lack of time. In Hamburg, there are currently also considerations to offer allotment garden plots to refugee groups so as to give them “a piece of normality”(Gartenfreunde

Hamburg, undated). For the garden associations, it is important that there is a responsible person in the group, who is signing the lease agreement and a written agreement with the initiative “which describes the nature and scope of the project and defines the group of participants” (ibid.).

Another concept, which has been tested since 2015 in the city of Mers, is the offer of so-called “seasonal gardens”, which take up the idea of self-supporting gardens, where small pre-planted beds (approx. 30 to 50 m<sup>2</sup>) are rented from spring to autumn to city residents, who are primarily interested in vegetable growing. The seasonal gardens “facilitate the entry into gardening for a limited time without a permanent obligation”(Genenger-Hein 2017: 11). However, a certain service and support seems important to the new gardeners. Thus, the association provides garden equipment and water as well as expert advice (ibid.).

These examples show impressively how allotment garden associations can offer a low-threshold entrance for potential future plot tenants and find new user groups.

Another aspect that could be stimulated by the community garden movement is the public welfare idea, which could also (again) move more strongly into the allotment gardens. Allotment gardens are usually located on public domain and in view of the increasing densification of the city, the allotment garden associations should be aware of their privilege of being able to dispose of partially lavish free spaces at a low cost. How can we deal with the pressure of growth on allotment garden facilities? What does this mean for the allotment garden associations and their institutionalised togetherness? Here, the following example is inspiring in many ways.

Due to its location at the national border, the rapidly growing city of Basel is hardly able to expand into the hin-

terland. In 2011, therefore, plans were made to release three of the 33 Basel family garden facilities, which, however, account for 40% of the allotment garden space in the urban area. The ensuing protests of the population resulted in a popular vote, which resulted in a compromise solution, which included 20% of the land being built on, while securing the remaining 80% of the area for allotment gardens. The subsequently amended legislation on the classification of allotment gardens goes beyond the actual protection of the existing gardens and anchors modern ideas on the use of allotment gardens. The facilities now designated as leisure time gardens must be accessible to the entire city population much more strongly than before. Their functionality is enhanced by the addition of new playgrounds, sports facilities and cafés.(Stadtgärtnerei Basel (undated)). Due to the changed image in the direction of leisure time and weekend gardens for all, significantly more user groups than the plot owners should benefit from the gardens.

Essentially, this is an intensification of use and thus a solution to deal with the growth pressure in such a way that existing public space is made available to the entire urban population, but at the same time a marginalisation of the family gardens is countered. (Eizenberg / Tappert / Thomas / Zilans 2016: 98).

## Conclusion

These examples show that allotment garden associations can understand the emergence of new forms of urban gardening and the changed demand for urban gardens as an opportunity. A look back into history shows that allotment gardens have always had to adapt themselves to changing needs, but also proved a great ability of adaptability. In the sense of sustainable urban development, allotment gardens and community gardens thus offer enormous potential for learning from each other and for getting clos-

er together. The examples included in this article provide some suggestions for this, but also show that the protection of existing gardens through the planning right is still of fundamen-

tal importance in order to negotiate in conflicts between desired inner densification and the preservation of open spaces in the city. For this purpose, it is necessary to integrate

existing gardens, be it the classic allotment gardens, but also community gardens, into the green infrastructure as a whole, not least because of the need to adapt to climate change.

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# USA-CANADA: Developments – Small gardens in North America

Werner Heidemann,

Director of the national allotment federation Westphalia-Lippe



*During the ACGA meeting several environment protection organisations inform on their social and ecological projects*

Since nearly four decades around 400 garden activists have been gathering yearly at the occasion of the meetings of the American Community gardening association (ACGA).

Amateur gardeners with different origins and educational backgrounds enrich the numerous workshops and lectures with many fresh ideas, supported by scientists and environment experts from universities, firms and authorities.

A short glance at some workshop topics from the last four years shows the diversity of these meetings and the engagement of the community gardeners on their sites. Consequently, these topics are also a mirror of the evolution of the small gardens in the USA and Canada,



*Lectures, working groups, discussions*

## Summary of the workshop topics:

- How do you start a gardening project?
- Participation of citizens and communal authorities while planning and creating gardening projects
- Extension of existing community gardens
- Gardens and climate change – gardens temper the consequences of climate change
- Creation of school gardens, working out of syllabi
- How to integrate socially poorer and homeless people into community gardens?
- Gardening with refugees, how to exchange with people of different cultural origins
- Small gardens for people in elderly people's homes

- Protection of insects – without pollination no harvest
- Creation of a seed exchange
- Health care and gardening, healthy diet, use of fruit and vegetables
- Soil protection, composting, fertilisation

## More environmental equity

How did the community gardens develop?

### *Here some personal impressions:*

In 2002 the organisers used their meeting at the Columbia University in New York City and the presence of international delegates for a protest walk through the Bronx in order to protest against the destruction and for the protection of community gardens in a PR effective way.

See also the following contribution: "Community gardens in New York City – a young and rich history".

The fighting for more environmental equity remains a central aim of the American Community gardeners: 15 years later at the occasion of the 37th meeting of the ACGA organised in Hartford from 27th till 30th July 2015 guest speaker Mark Winne, expert for diet questions and global food supply, made the introductory lecture peppered with a radical political analysis of the societal situation in America and formulated concrete recommendations for the participants.



**Mark Winne:**

*"We need the voice of the community gardeners, their hunger for more social and economic equity". He continued: "It is a myth, if community gardeners think that they should not need to draw the attention on them in public."*

**His recommendations to the participants:**

- Sensitise politicians and authorities for your ideas
- Community is important, not only gardening
- Draw the attention to your good performances and create good relations with other organisations which you support
- Worry about food policy, sustainable food security and healthy diet, cooperate yourself in different bodies on political level
- Poverty is the reason for hunger; the time is ripe for more engagement against inequality as far as resources are concerned and against the existing differences in wealth.

**Community gardens – a colourful diversity**

The discussions in the workshops and the lectures were much broader than an isolated consideration of ecological subjects as for example: renunciation to use pesticides, the

use of compost and fresh herbs for teas and salads. In America small gardens are for the poor people in society, the homeless, the sick and the unemployed that are outside of the social care system. They really constitute an anchor for them, also from an economic point of view.

Here they can get stronger, gather strength and can, with the support of the community, raise their voice for more social equity and sustainable acting.

The community gardens in the USA and Canada have a size of some 100 m<sup>2</sup> with mini plots for the gardeners and often have no shed, no bushes and trees. There are no long-term rent agreements. Many gardens are situated on empty spaces on unconstructed grounds belonging to building societies.

The affiliation fees and rents differ. In Minneapolis the gardeners pay between 10 and 15 US \$ per season according to the size of the plot to the local gardening organisation. When fixing the affiliation fees, some associations take the personal income situation into consideration. So, it can happen that on the same site for a plot of the same size the affiliation fee can be either 7.5, 15 or 50 US \$.



*Groups of visitors from the AGCA meeting in the school garden of New London High School. The harvested vegetables are prepared together in the school kitchen. The chef Tomm Johnson shows how to proceed.*



In other gardening projects the social or therapeutic aspect is a central question to be able to use a garden. Homeless citizens help with the ecological cultivation of herbs and vegetables, receive part of the harvest or can improve their small budget by selling the vegetables. Some other gardening projects focus on the use of the harvested products. Children, mothers and fathers learn how they can easily prepare a healthy and inexpensive meal with vegetables.

### A community gives strength

The ACGA aims at creating an organisation with many members and at having a good networking of different green and gardening groups in order to become a strong partner and get considered in politics and by the authorities.

The ACGA up to now is lacking a homogeneous and strong membership in order to succeed in a national implementation of their interests. Many gardening groups for example "Green Thumb" and "Green Guerillas" have been fighting very hard locally for many years to protect their gardens, for example, in New York City. At the beginning they were weak, but today they are more and more considered by politicians and the media because they are supported on a trans-regional basis by the national organisation they are affiliated to.

Considering both these facts and the new experiences gained in North America, the German participants in this conference appreciate to its right value, the advantages of a really well-organised allotment movement from the local associations up to the central national federation and a Ger-

man allotment garden law with its pillars like, for example, a maximum rent charge and the protection against the termination of a lease.

### ACGA – Who, how, what?

The „American Community Gardening Association“(ACGA) is a voluntary, bi-national organisation (USA and Canada) competent for gardens taken on lease and social public green (community gardens, school gardens, farms for young people, therapy gardens). The ACGA defends the interests of the "poor people", who in many different ways care for and cultivate the small gardens, taken on lease.

Community gardens are on principle gardens, which are administrated by a leaseholder community. These gardens are used for the cultivation of fruit and vegetables for one's own need. That way socially poor citizens have access to fresh fruit and vegetables. Other gardening projects get small income from selling fruit and vegetables of which the gardeners and the gardens can take advantage.

### Aims:

- Improvement of the quality of life, especially in the socially difficult urban areas
- sensitisation of people of all ages, especially children and young people for nature
- improvement of the communication by gardening in the urban neighbourhoods.

### More information:

[www.communitygarden.org](http://www.communitygarden.org)



Edible gardens in the public green areas in Boston.



The visitor learns so more on a nature friendly cultivation of vegetables and mixed cultivation. The harvest is donated to relief organisations.



# USA: Community gardens in New York City – an eventful history

Werner Heidemann,

Director of the national allotment federation Westphalia-Lippe



*Citizens and participants of the ACGA-conference protesting in 2002 for the obtainment of community gardens in NYC.*

When at the beginning of the 1990s properties in several neighbourhoods – including the Bronx – gained in value because of the influx of newly rich citizens, numerous gardens were destroyed, to make way for the construction of new buildings. In 1991 the New York City Housing Authority announced their intention to build 35 new public housing flats on garden grounds. The garden area originally has been founded by a youth organisation. The project name „The Dome – Development of Opportunities through Meaningful Education“ was sponsoring the social programme of this gardening community. The users of the garden then were well aware of the necessity of social housing. So, because there were 13 suitable vacant lots in the local area – without gardens – they proposed to use these lots as an alternative for their construction

projects. But the Housing Authority insisted on the original area.

Countless public hearings were held, the local politicians of the district fiercely resisted. Shortly before the date of eviction many garden owners chained themselves to their fences. But the city administration was relentless and in the evening hours of May 24 1994 made the 15-year-old garden level with the ground with a bulldozer.

Another problem for the allotment gardeners in New York City were the city administration's plans for privatisation. In 1998 hundreds of municipal gardens, sometimes cared for lovingly over 20 years, were privatised. With this measure the city wanted to get rid of its responsibility over their gardens and “cash up”. With short-term purchase offers that expired after 30

days and the auction of allotment garden properties the city put the garden tenants under enormous pressure. Many community gardeners sued against this course of action. The majority of lawsuits were dismissed though. In addition, the city changed its areas of responsibility. Community gardens were so far managed by the park authorities. In the future, the department for housing should man-





Visitors are cordially welcomed.



Community gardens at the heart of Manhattan – open for all citizens and active garden users. The small gardens of the “Urban Farm at the Battery” are within easy reach on foot from Wall Street and Broadway.



Community gardens are an answer to the global economic crisis too – Congress participants visit the “Bed Stuy Farm” in Brooklyn.

age allotment garden properties. So, a conflict of interest between “construction” on one side and the “protection of green spaces” on the other side, was predestined.

New hopes for the allotment gardeners emerged when in May 1999 a lawsuit on federal level strengthened the rights of garden owners. In the course of this legal action, initiated by the “Green Guerillas”, the chairman of the tenants’ association of the Bronx and other honorary garden organisations as well as individual gardeners, the court declared, that the city of New York City has, in the course of transferring the garden properties from the park authorities to the department of housing, not enough taken into account the environmental compatibility of the process.

Furthermore, the Federal court made clear that community gardens de facto are being used as “park landscape” and thereby belong to “to be protected against urban development park landscapes”, whose protection is regulated by state laws. For the first time a court recognised and accepted the welfare impact of community gardens to some extent.

*Hereto Gerard Lordahl, director of the ACGA in 2002: “The community gardens of New York are an integral part of the entire green spaces of the city, they are places of recreation, that cost the city near to nothing. Community gardeners take on services of the city, that are of highest value for the general public. These services include: childcare, landscaping, cultivation of fresh foods, the supply of the homeless with food, caring for neighbours and the fight against street crime and violence through employment and relaxation in the garden.”*

#### **The consequences of this trial were far-reaching:**

The sales of garden property or constructional changes were prohibited

and together the administration, local politics and community gardeners developed a new protection concept for the gardens.

In 2010 approximately 300 of the New York community gardens were included in the city’s legislation for the first time. The new garden laws determined that actively used community gardens are protected, as long as the garden organisation “Green Thumb” managed them.

The city’s community garden programme “Green Thumb” of the Departments of Parks and Recreation of New York City is the biggest programme of this type in the USA. Today there are about 500 community gardens in New York City with an average size of about 230 m<sup>2</sup>. In this group of gardeners there are about 10 gardeners that use the little plots with their families.

Most of the community gardens are in districts where the majority of citizens are still living below the official poverty line. In these districts fresh fruit and vegetables are often unavailable or unaffordable for the citizens. In about 80 % of the gardens that are registered with “Green Thumb” vegetables and herbs for personal needs are cultivated or they are distributed to the poor.

#### **Conclusion**

“Community gardening” is also a legacy of the political struggle of the 1990s, when community gardeners organised themselves citywide and protested on the streets for the protection of their gardens. This grass-roots movement eventually brought together the community gardeners, the city administration and the local politics.



# Austria: Allotment gardens vs. community gardens – a politically initiated conflict

Mag. Sylvia Wohatschek



Community gardens do not pose any danger to the Austrian allotment garden movement. Since allotment gardens in Austria are protected by their own law, community gardens are not a real competition.

However, these new forms of urban gardening have developed into an annoyance in recent years. This annoyance is not based on the fear of displacement, but on the feeling of an uneven treatment.

For 100 years allotment gardens have been organised in the Central Federation of allotment gardeners of Austria. Over the last 100 years, we have ensured the survival of the population in times of crisis, created living space, secured the image as green cities and taken over the care of urban green space.

During the war, inter-war and post-war periods, the allotment gardens and harvest gardens secured the survival of the population, because on these plots those vegetables were grown, cultivated and nurtured, that were passed on to family, relatives, acquaintances and work colleagues. Many people were less hungry due to the war gardens than they would otherwise have been.

After the war, the allotment gardens offered living space, which had become scarce because of the bombed cities. This made it possible to take enormous pressure from the cities regarding urban development. In the 1990s even a special dedication was created in Vienna, which makes it possible to build one's main residence in an allotment garden. Many allotment gardeners have made use of this op-

portunity and have built up a new type of allotment garden house to live in. With what support? With almost none. The funding is provided solely by the allotment gardeners, who also boost the local economy with their building project and are likely to free a flat owned by the city.

Allotment gardens are part of the green space of the city. A green space, which is nurtured with much love and devotion by us allotment gardeners. In Austria, the "Central Federation of allotment gardeners in Austria" manages an area of around 800 hectares, mainly in urban areas. 800 hectares, which have not to be further cared for by the local authorities, but which are – on the contrary – cultivated by us allotment gardeners. As if this considerable advantage (along with the accompanied cost savings) was not





enough, the cities will even get a rent for these areas and can also boast with the image of a “green city”.

We have been doing this for 100 years for the community, the cities and municipalities. Of course, we also have an enormous advantage from it. We have our allotment gardens, which give us an incomparable experience of nature in the middle of the city, our children the unspoilt growing up in and with nature, they integrate us into the community of the allotment gardeners and keep some of us from the isolation of the big city. The advantages are therefore also enormous for the individual allotment gardener.

Nevertheless, our performance does not seem to be good enough now-

adays. Our cultivation of the urban green space is becoming a matter of course for politics. For some of the political camps we, that built huts in the past, are suddenly only squanders of space, because one could get more out of an allotment garden plot. And anyway, we narrow-minded allotment gardeners already have degenerated into an elitist group that has no reason to be supported.

This is the picture which we are taught about ourselves through politics. We are an aloof group that has an exclusive right that should be taken from them. Luckily, there is our allotment legislation, otherwise we would really have to fear for our survival. Well, our survival is secured, but we weren't able to grow for years. For years, we have not received any new land to open up allotment garden facilities (at our own expense, of course). For years, we have pledges of private people to get land when the dedication is changed. For years, we have had to put off and dismiss hundreds of interested parties who want an allotment garden plot. For years, it has always been the same old story, for years there has been no political support for us.

And then there is this new form of urban gardening, the “community gardens”, the healing, innovative structure that makes the city so much more beautiful, modern, simply better. In the middle of heavily frequented streets you now find this concrete, wood or plastic container with the healthy vegetables in it. The politicians are beside themselves, because of this commitment, this dedication. But not enough. NO. They encourage the construction of community gardens even financially! They provide funds, land, experience, etc. to help these pioneers of

gardening build their green idea.

And what do we allotment gardeners get? The prescription of the lease fee we have to pay once a year.

In the course of this unequal treatment, it seems to be only comprehensible that the community gardens have become an annoyance for us.

This is – to be honest – our own idea anyway. After all, what did the post-war harvest gardens do differently than to acquire any open space and cultivate it? This happened even upon the specific request of the city. Despite all that, we allotment gardeners feel that they have treated us like a proverbial “stepchild” for years. We pay, we cultivate, we finance everything by ourselves, and for that we are not only not being supported, but even run down. In view of our achievements over the last 100 years, this is more than unjust.

Nevertheless, we can learn from each other – allotment gardeners and community gardeners. The stronger involvement of the neighbourhood in the community of the allotment gardeners could be pushed forward with the help of the idea of a community garden. Integrating community garden initiatives into our allotment garden facilities could help us all. In return, community gardeners can learn from our decades of experience in forming an association, association organisation and togetherness that we live daily.

In summary, we must emphasise that we should not allow politics to divide us, but that we have to try to find common ways, for a peaceful, respectful and mutually beneficial co-existence.

# Great-Britain: Allotments /Community Gardens

## Allotments past –

Brief history of allotments taken  
from the NAS website

Phil Gomersall

President National Allotment Society (NAS)



*Community garden - The Northcliffe  
Project for people with disabilities.*



*An allotment site.*

### What is an allotment?

Allotments have been in existence for hundreds of years, with evidence pointing back to Anglo-Saxon times. But the system we recognise today has its roots in the Nineteenth Century, when land was given over to the labouring poor for the provision of food growing. This measure was desperately needed thanks to the rapid industrialisation of the country and the lack of a welfare state. In 1908 the Small Holdings and Allotments Act came into force, placing a duty on lo-

cal authorities to provide sufficient allotments, according to demand. However, it wasn't until the end of the First World War that land was made available to all, primarily as a way of assisting returning service men (Land Settlement Facilities Act 1919) instead of just the labouring poor. The rights of allotment holders in England and Wales were strengthened through the Allotments Acts of 1922, but the most important change can be found in the Allotments Act of 1925 which estab-

lished statutory allotments which local authorities could not sell off or convert without Ministerial consent, known as Section 8 Orders. The Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society have published a paper that sums up the situation in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Councils can provide allotments but do not have a statutory duty to do so. Further legislation has been listed over the intervening years which have affected allotments, the latest of which is the Localism Act 2011.





*An allotment plot.*



*The English eccentric's shed.*

### Rents and Tenancy Agreements

As allotments are leased from landlords, allotment holders are required to pay rent. This money is used to cover the water rates and general maintenance bills. This rent can be anything from a peppercorn amount through to £ 100 a year per plot holder, but most are in the region of £ 25 -£ 125 each. Despite there being legal statutes relating to allotments, nowhere do they state how much rent should be charged or collected, instead general terminology is used, citing that the rent should be a "reasonable amount" which the "tenant would expect to pay".

Allotment holders, and in turn the local allotment societies they form, are obliged to sign a tenancy agreement which outlines what is expected of

them by the landlord. These agreements cover the rent due, the kind of activities which can take place on the land, the building of sheds, subletting issues, as well as the general behaviour of the plot holders. A Tenancy Agreement dating back to 1846 serving the Parish of Husbands Bosworth states "Every occupier is expected to attend divine service on Sundays; and any occupier who digs potatoes or otherwise works on his land on Sunday shall immediately forfeit the same". Things have changed a little in the last 150 years, as Sundays are now the most popular day of the week for gardening.

### Allotments' present

Allotment sites in the UK vary tremendously in size, ownership, management and form. The standard plot is 250 m<sup>2</sup> but many are let as half and quarter plots. Primarily they are used for the provision of home grown food and all the additional benefits to health and wellbeing that they can bring to the individual and the community.

The vast majority of allotment sites are owned by Local Authorities; County, Borough, City, Town and Parish Councils (ultimately where there is a Parish Council they have the responsibility to provide allotments).

If the site is owned by any of the above and has been specifically provided as allotments they will then have legal statutory protection under the Allotment Acts.

However, if the Council specifies they are only temporary provision, this protection would not apply.

Some allotments are leased from private landowners and again do not have statutory protection.

There are a few sites which are donated to the community by deed of covenant and are quite often under the management of the local authority.

In addition, there are private allotment sites either leased to a council or run by private individuals or organisations e. g. churches. A few sites are owned by plot-holders themselves as share-holders.

### Management

There are further variations on the management of allotments to that mentioned above.

Directly managed sites are where the council manage and maintain the site and collect rents which quite often include water charges. Many Councils, due to financial and staffing cutbacks do not maintain sites to an acceptable standard.

Some council run sites have a voluntary individual representative who quite often gets his /her plot free of charge for acting as a representative for the plot-holders.

A variation on this is where an Association is formed for the benefit of the site and acts as the representative.

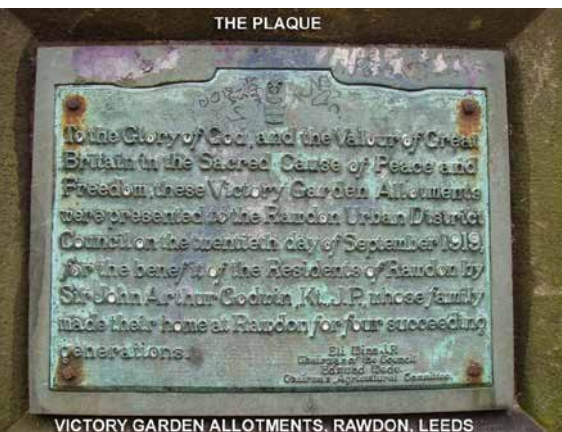


*An 'In Bloom' group preparing a flower bed.*



*Allotment plots, city centre for employees of businesses.*





*Victory garden - allotment site by deed of covenant.*

Then there is devolved management of sites where an Association takes on a more managerial role, usually having a fixed term lease with the landowner. They take on maintenance of the site, letting of plots, collecting rents and providing insurance cover and the paying of land rent to the council.

### Allotment Associations

- Usually formed as unincorporated bodies
- They sometimes register as a charity
- They can also become a Ltd. Company with assistance from the N. A. S. which acts as a sponsor and reduces the costs of incorporation as an Industrial and Provident Society, giving them much more control over the day to day management of their site.

### Federations

Are formed by groups of sites / associations either in a County, Region, City or Town, primarily to give a stronger and more unified voice but also to assist one another through networking and create some uniformity and common goals for the mutual benefit of the groups.

### NAS Policy Document 107: Use of Land Designated Allotments for Other Forms of Gardening

1. The Society holds that land designated for use as allotment gardens

(be it on a statutory basis or otherwise) should be used for the purpose intended. This land should be subdivided into allotment gardens and made available for cultivation by individual growers on terms defined by a tenancy agreement.

2. The Society recognises, however, that in some circumstances alternative ways of organizing cultivation, including collective cultivation by people without individual tenancies, can be complementary to allotment gardening. This is particularly so when individuals feel empowered, through the acquisition of gardening and related skills, to apply for plots of their own, with a consequent widening of participation in allotment gardening.
3. Where there are people on waiting lists for allotment gardens, the Society believes that it is inappropriate for land that is designated for use as allotment gardens and is either currently or potentially fit for that purpose, to be newly allocated instead to forms of cultivation other than allotment gardening.
4. The Society recognises, however, that Allotment Authorities and other allotment providers may still wish to accommodate existing projects based on alternative ways of organizing cultivation, where these were established when allotment gardens were in surplus supply, and which continue to perform a role that is complementary to allotment gardening.
5. The Society also recognises that alternative complementary uses may be appropriate for land enclosed within allotment sites that is not suitable for cultivation as allotment gardens.
6. Where gardening organised on a basis other than individual allotment gardens is located on land designated for use as allotments,

the Society believes that it should be governed by legal and administrative arrangements that assure compliance with allotment law, which are binding on all participants in the project, and which ensure the timely return of the land, in a condition no worse than that in which it was first acquired for alternative use, to allotment garden use when there is a demand for it, at no cost to the Allotment Authority or other allotment provider.

7. The Society recognises the inherent value of other ways of organising gardening, and will cooperate with representative bodies to help ensure that land is available for these where the demand for allotment gardens allows; that any relocations from allotment garden land to enable reversion to allotment garden use are conducted sympathetically; and that synergies between allotment gardens and other forms of gardening are promoted irrespective of where the latter may be located.
8. The Society notes that a wide variety of names are in current use to describe forms of gardening practiced on allotment garden sites which are at variance with the statutory definition of an allotment garden. It regards those names that include the adjective "community" as misleading and would encourage its members to consider whether it is in their best interests to continue to use them. While this adjective is popular with funders, it can also deflect attention from the communities of interest and concern that typify allotment sites through the voluntary and spontaneous association of allotment gardeners, to which the adjective "community" can also be legitimately attached. The Society also does not believe it appropriate to apply the word "allotment" to gardening schemes that do not comply with the definitions underpinning the Allotment Acts.

## Community Gardens

Have many different forms and are usually created in developed or urban areas, usually with the permission of the local authority and are generally run by charity organisations or groups with different growing or environmental agendas to that of allotment gardeners. Their gardens are sometimes created on leased land as an enterprise or simply developed on a neglected nooks and crannies within a community and even sometimes in people's gardens.

The above gardens have no legal protection and are usually reliant on external funding for their creation.

The community garden is as it says for the community with no individual having ownership.

The guerrilla gardeners are groups of individuals who plant up empty flower beds and other pieces of dormant land with vegetables, so the public can help themselves to the produce, and are created sometimes with and sometimes without authority permissions.

Therapeutic gardening projects quite often run by charities for specific members of society e. g. people with physical or learning difficulties.

Community Agriculture – Usually run by a non-profit making social enterprise organisation, having paid leaders with a volunteer work force and selling fresh produce to the community.

Inner City garden plots for commercial business these are for employees to use. Constructed by a developer and offered as a bonus for the employees of their tenant businesses. One developer offers this type of garden facility to their flat dwellers.

"Friends of" groups are formed by volunteers to look after public spaces e. g. sensory gardens in parks, grave yards and woodland. Quite often as

a result of council cut backs on staff levels.

"In Bloom" groups are volunteer groups formed to improve their local environment by tidying up and planting up areas which were previously untidy, dull or just uninteresting. The 'In-bloom' movement is becoming quite a large movement at local, city, county and national levels.

## Management of Community Gardens

This is quite often under the leadership of a paid employee working for a charity or specific type of gardening organisation and backed up by a voluntary committee, or they can be an unincorporated group of volunteers.

## Problems and difficulties on allotment sites with community groups

There is one big fundamental difference between allotment gardens and community gardens and that is that the allotment holder works as an individual, rents the plot of land for his /her sole use, to cultivate produce for his /her own consumption. (It is illegal to sell produce off an allotment with the exception where the funds are for the allotment association)

Whereas the community gardener works in a group and has no right to individual ground space or the produce cultivated.

So, when community garden groups attempt to get onto allotment land, this creates many complications. (Quite often the group hopes to sell the produce they cultivate to raise funds for their respective charity which is against allotment law).

In addition to the conflict mentioned above there are other complications, the letting agreements don't usually cater for a multitude of plot-holders but even if that hurdle is overcome there is the problem of insurance coverage with many unnamed persons

coming and going on site. These problems in some cases can be overcome and there are many minority groups on allotments. These groups quite often require a covered area larger than that permitted for the site, but usually they can be accommodated.

However, the more radical gardeners and their group's ideals quite often conflict with allotment rules and this has created many problems on sites e. g. creating raised beds using old tyres, growing weeds for wildlife and growing non-fruiting trees.

## Equality

The external funding system unfortunately favours the Community groups quite often as they often create mini projects which tick most of the funding criteria boxes and in many cases as businesses their publicity machines can make these small projects look like huge events which both the councils and the funders like as it shows them off in a good light.

With the allotments generally being on land owned by the council, funders are less inclined to offer funding despite the sites ticking most boxes and being self-managed by volunteers and offering many benefits to the community. Funders still seem to have an underlying view that councils should provide and overlook the fact that in most cases these sites are leased to and self-managed by volunteers.

## Sustainability

I have been involved with allotments over 25 years now and I can honestly say that I believe Allotment Gardening is the only truly sustainable form of gardening for the community.

## Community Gardens

In my view are a short-term fix and, in most cases, created to satisfy the needs and views of a minority, fringe or even radical gardeners.

This is a generalisation of course, and there are some very good community



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[www.nsaig.org.uk](http://www.nsaig.org.uk)

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<p>0845 313 8425 (national rate) or 01603 620 777 (local rate)                  NSAG is a registered charity (No. 262819) and a company limited by guarantee (No. 02052929).                  Registered office: 77 Theobald Road, Norwich, Norfolk NR1 1JH. VAT No. 950 608 623.</p>		

organisations doing very good work at present for some of the under-privileged, disadvantaged and disability groups.

I have however over the years seen so many community gardens collapse into disrepair either due to the paid worker moving to a different employment or possibly even just brought about through the waning interest of volunteers, as maintenance of a project is not as exciting as creation. Occasionally there has been the no take up of a group's project by the public that it was created for.

Another reason however may be the lack of personal ownership which brings with it a greater personal pride to the gardener.

Funders fund creation and all the hype that goes with it but are not so keen on funding the maintenance of these projects, which is a little more mundane.

**To add further confusion**

Some councils have called their allotments 'community allotments' maybe to overcome the funding stigma but in doing so have created a lot of confusion as allotments are allotments and community gardens are community gardens and as pointed out are very, very different.

*Some of the views stated are my own and may not reflect those of the NAS.*

# Netherlands: The connection of community gardens and allotment gardens

Ans Hobbelink, AVVN



*b&b in an allotment*



*in an allotment park, preparing the foodgarden for a new season*

Nowadays we observe a strong relationship between new forms of organised community gardening – such as urban agriculture, neighbourhood gardens, natural gardens, food gardens – and the longer existing allotment gardens in the Netherlands. How can this be explained?

Everywhere in the world cities have been founded on fertile grounds with access to water. Recently an interesting book was published, which covers 2000 years of food production and gardening in and around the city of Utrecht. The city already grew its own food in Roman times. It also formed the centre for regional trade in livestock, fish, grain, vegetables and fruit. A history that is still visible in the names of streets and squares, such as the Light Orchard, Oatstreet, Gardenstreet and the Geesemarket. It goes too far in the scope of this article to reflect what has happened since then with the cultivation of food and gardening in an urban environment. What follows is a picture of recent history.

## **Allotment: from vegetable garden to recreational and ornamental garden**

In the past two centuries, food is no longer grown / produced in places where it will be consumed. Cities are depending on transport, accessibility and prices for their food. In the Netherlands urban agriculture was an important part of life for urban residents in the city until the turn of the last century. Thanks to benefactors, industrialists and social unions, and some local authorities later on, also poor labour families in the Netherlands were able to acquire a piece of land to grow food for their own use. It marks the beginning of allotment gardens in the second half of the 19th century. A century ago, in 1917, the first union of allotment growers was founded in Amster-

dam, followed 11 years later by the national society, the AVVN.

Cities have grown and crammed. The pressure on land constantly increased in urban areas. Growing vegetables in allotment gardens to feed families was important. After World War II this was not necessary anymore because of the rapid increase of production and availability of cheap food. The need to be able to retreat from the busy city partly came in its place. For residents, recreation in green space became more and more important in the allotment. Tiny houses were built in sometimes beautiful ornamental gardens. Food production remained, but as a supplement and for pleasure.

## **Rich inside, unknown outside**

In the 70s and 80s of the last century the need of families to recreate on allotments became less important. Other forms of recreation arose and competed with gardening and the associated leisure activities. Due to the pressure on land, many associations were forced to relocate their gardens outside the ever-expanding city. In addition, the assistance of the AVVN was indispensable to include the allotments in zoning plans.

Gardeners created paradisiacal parks, sometimes with a high biodiversity and unusual plants, but in their own gardens and within the association culture. They organised competitions for associations in the cultivation of plants such as dahlias, chrysanthemums and sweet peas. The gardeners





*kids yielding in their kidsgarden in an allotment*



*Making a temporary community garden.*

were good at exchanging knowledge both in the area of the ornamental garden and the vegetable garden. Some garden sites stimulated visitors to enjoy the splendour, as an act of social behaviour towards non-gardening people. For many years, the AVVN has advocated that garden associations should open themselves to the outside world, not only from a social point of view but also in order not to become isolated. At that time unfortunately with little success.

A tendency towards a defensive and closed attitude of the associations was perceptible. This was clearly apparent from the high fences and hedges. The result was that the visibility, importance and fame of the allotment gardening thus literally disappeared from the picture in society. Allotments were found to be unattractive by young people and the membership base became outdated. Some gardens had to be closed, not only for

reasons of displacement, but also due to the lack of new members. The number of hectares that could be cultivated decreased dramatically.

Some associations did see the importance of combining functions and ties. They devised new concepts and called their site "Garden Park". They recognised that allotment gardens were the connecting factor to nature in the city, and thus became pioneers for the next episode. The AVVN was able to support this with designs for multifunctional garden parks.

In the 1990s, several developments influenced how to run an allotment garden site. An important fact was that local authorities no longer accepted that allotment gardeners could only use a garden site for themselves. With the support of the AVVN, the sites slowly but surely opened themselves up to the public and the associations encouraged people from the surrounding area to share their use. In addition, the influence of the growing environmental and nature movement was unmistakable. In the garden associations, too, a movement started towards the organic cultivation of vegetables and the use of, for example, compost in the ornamental gardens because of their critical attitude towards gardening with chemical pesticides.

AVVN started a long-term project that would become the crown jewel of allotment gardens in the Netherlands: the Nationaal Keurmerk Natuurlijk Tuinieren (the National Quality Mark of Natural Gardening). Under professional guidance, gardeners were given a few years to learn how to deal with nature, ecology and biodiversity in a garden park. The progress was judged by dots on a ladybird, the hallmark symbol. Once the maximum of four dots had been reached, the whole association could celebrate and the flag went out. Even today, dozens of garden associations are still working hard to win the desirable dots. Com-

municating the valuable natural characteristics with pride within and outside the association is an integral part of this.

These developments attracted new generations and types of gardeners. And very unusual: long waiting lists for a garden. Since 2000, more women have been taking part in gardening activities, even in the previously rather male-dominated boards. We see more ethnicities in the allotments, especially where the vegetable growing predominates. The associations are finding new ways to govern democratically so that everyone can participate and belong to them. The best thing, however, is that the association of our time leaves room for differences. Each association is a small people's society and practises democracy there on a daily basis. But above all: more openness and exchange with the environment and neighbourhoods is a fact now.



### Gardening reinvented

In recent years, however, we see a trend in society that seems irreversible. City dwellers want room for recreation and contact with green and nature. Healthy food is important for people. They want to know how and where food is produced. Research has shown that contact with and exercise in a green environment is healthy and has a calming effect. A new theme emerged: ensuring a climate-proof future.

Growing your own food and enjoying nature gives something extra. We are witnessing an energetic movement of citizens working with it. In the Netherlands, we have seen a multiplicity of initiatives in the past fifteen years in the field of nature, greenery, food cultivation, ecology and biodiversity in the city, and in the countryside too. Most of them are small and in-



*Nature in the gardenpark*

tended for use by nearby residents. Unfortunately, community gardens are often of a temporary nature, on brown field land where, for example, houses have to be built. However, we observe partnerships and large-scale social enterprises based on the rediscovery of gardening. Nature and environmental organisations are reviving with new energy and attracting a lot of volunteers.

### Diversity

As already mentioned, the diversity of members in allotments is an entirely new feature: young and old, men and women, families and single persons, white, brown and black, different religions. If you look closely at the current member files of the allotment gardens, something remarkable happens: these people include a large number of supporters of this new nature-and-food movement. For some members, it finally means recognition for their vision on gardening. Allotment gardeners of today are, for example,

members of a bird, bee or butterfly association. Others participate in the community garden next door, help constructing the food garden, teaching little children in nature education, allotment-beekeepers making a beehive in the municipal park. All kinds of cross-pollinations take place here.

### Examples

The following examples illustrate how allotment gardens integrate the new phenomena of the new movement around food cultivation, community gardening and ecology.

1. Food garden: An allotment garden association has made an area available to grow food for the local food bank. Some horticulturists maintain the plot and ensure that the harvest is delivered to the food bank.
2. Permaculture garden: An allotment garden association has acquired a nearby plot of rugged land. An orchard used to be established there but has been abandoned for years. A small group of passionate horticulturists make a permaculture garden of it and involve the other members of the association in this garden by offering new skills.
3. Energy neutral garden: An allotment garden association wanted to make their garden park energy neutral. They already work a lot with people from the neighbourhood and have experts there who wanted to help. The park now has green nature lighting, a considerable number of solar panels and is thinking about making green roofs.
4. Water management. An association wanted to find out why there is no running surface water anymore and why dehydration is also taking place in the surrounding neighbourhood. When building a road years ago, a temporary construction was not removed. The horticulturists demonstrated this

to the water boards and the government. They are getting right and a new water supply is being created, adapted to the time with ecological fish ladders.

### Feeding the city again?

The expertise of allotment horticulturists has been rediscovered, gardeners themselves learn to look, think and do things differently. Gardening and growing food require knowledge, patience, dedication and creativity. All this can be learned. Recently, local governments in The Netherlands have been considering how to give a future-oriented answer in a so-called food strategy. Someone who wants to feed on the harvest of their own cultivated crops has to grow 40 m<sup>2</sup> all year round, according to the University of Wageningen. That will not happen in a city nowadays. Although Esther Veen showed in the thesis of "Community



*Planning the work in spring in the community garden*



*Wild fruit in the allotment*



gardens in urban areas” in 2015 that nowadays allotment gardens produce more food than community gardens, it remains a minimal quantity. Thus, the food problem will not be solved in our petrified cities, but we see a green engine for the future to which our allotments make an important contribution.

### **Local versus national**

At local level, we find all kinds of initiatives and connections between them. Sometimes a bit more social, such as neighbourhood gardens between flats and care gardens in care centres, oth-

ers more focused on food production such as food gardens for minima and food banks, or organic horticulture. This is not yet the case at national level. There, organisations seem to operate independently of each other. As AVVN, we have taken the initiative to join forces with partners on national level to find out what unites us. There is a battle to win. The available green space in cities is still decreasing. The hectares of allotment area have also decreased over the last years, and this at a time of ever-increasing food, gardener, urban farming and nature movement. It is a long road between

self-sufficient cities of 2000 years ago, the petrified cities of today, and a sustainable future.

### **Reinventing the roots of allotment gardens**

As a result, we see that allotment garden associations are as important for social ideals as they were in the past. With the difference that they no more garden only for themselves, but also for people outside their associations and for the biodiversity in the urban area. Meanwhile, they have achieved the openness to learn from new green and social initiatives around them.

# Denmark: Urban gardening in Denmark

Grethe Bjerregaard,

editor Havebladet



In Denmark we have a more than 100 years long tradition of allotment gardening.

For many years this has been the dominant way of growing small plots of gardens and so it still is.

However, during the recent years, many different ways of growing small plots of land have appeared. Some to stay, others to disappear again after a fairly short time.

## Many names to and types of really small gardens

The most common name for the small gardens is urban gardens, but others have been used: container gardens, movable gardens, community gardens, spontaneously planned gardens and so on.

The gardens are very, very different but the common denominator is that

it is people with a drive and a need to do something for people's wellbeing, the environment, the community and so on that take the initiative and try to involve other persons in the projects.



It is now, again, popular to grow your own vegetables, herbs and fruit and the gardens are to be considered as small oases where you can harvest your own produce grown in a way you like.

Most of the gardens are in the bigger cities of Denmark.

## The king's garden and more, Copenhagen

Many tourists visit the castle Rosenborg and the garden surrounding it, the King's Garden. In this garden The Danish Building and Property Agency in 2015 together with the organization tagtomat (roof tomato) established a small series of elevated beds and a small greenhouse where anybody, who wants to, can participate or else just enjoy the area in this garden, that dates to approximately 1600.



In Copenhagen there are more gardens of the same type, some of which are bigger with more features such as hens and chickens, goats, bees, birds and so on. One garden is as big as about 600 m<sup>2</sup> and established on the roof of a car sales shop in the center of Copenhagen. You pay a fee and in return you get the seasons vegetables, eggs and honey from the garden. There is a restaurant placed in the middle of the garden. Here of course the produce from the garden is served.

If you want to find out more about this type of gardens in Copenhagen, you may follow

<https://have-siden.dk/byhaver-i-kobenhavn/>

### **Ø-haven (the eastern-garden) Aarhus**

Aarhus is the second biggest city in Denmark and in 2014 the city council in cooperation with landowners in Aarhus Ø (the eastern part of Aarhus) found an empty space of land on which to establish very small gardens (4 m<sup>2</sup>). The gardens have to be relocated following the use of the space for new buildings. This has happened a couple of times and each time more gardens have been established. In the summer of 2017 there were about 300 gardens. Each garden costs 300 dk. to rent per season. Only those who have paid the fee can grow the gardens and use the produce from it, but everybody is invited to come to visit and to use the common facilities such as furniture, outdoor kitchen and barbecue.

In addition to the gardens there are bees, hens, greenhouses, green walls, green roofs, meeting facilities, events for both the public and urban farmers and sales outlets in cooperation with local traders.

*If you want to learn more about Ø-haven visit*  
<http://oehaven.dk/>

### **Urban gardens are local gardens**

Some of the Danish allotment gardens are visited by many tourists. The urban gardens are planned for the local population and often off the beaten track. As a tourist you may be lucky to pass by these gardens when you walk around the city but be assured that you are always very welcome.

# Sweden: Urban Gardening Hoegalid (Högalid)

Ulrika Flodin Furås



Christina Schaffer



Cultivation group

From the street you don't suspect anything, and the subway entrance of Hornstull is just as grey and dull as most entrances are. A place one just hurries past. Few anticipate that on the roof of the subway entrance lies a garden that beats most. Here the manicured and prosperous community culture "Urban Gardening Hoegalid" is situated.

One part of the cultures is situated on the slightly sloping lawn below the Church of Hoegalid. The other part is grown in boxes, i. e. pallet collars, placed on a roof terrace above the subway entrance. The culture is inspired by a forestry garden. Its best is shown near the Church, where one can clearly see green manure and cover crops in the culture beds, separated by logs that are fetched from nearby. A forest garden mimics nature itself and is founded on the principles that plants support each other. The high

trees (that in the city are equivalent to the building facades) protect the other plants against wind and weather and thus create a good microclimate. Here are different layers of vegetation, such as bushes and climbers like beans, and at the bottom ground cover. An important part of the forest gardening is the green manure. Here are also several plants that collect nitrogen, like beans and clover. These are used in the cover crops.

We are quite a few engaged in the "Urban Gardening Hoegalid", says Christina Schaffer, chairman of the association. About five to seven of us are active and meet every Tuesday afternoon during the summer to attend to the cultivations.

This Tuesday evening when "Kolonitädgården" (The Allotment Garden Magazine) visits, about ten members have gathered. Tonight, they will

have a dinner composed of the day's harvest.

It is a joint cultivation. Everything is grown, attended and harvested together. The set-up gives you freedom. You can go away during the summer and still know that your garden will be looked after. The set-up also gives you a great variety of vegetables.

In spring, members give suggestions to what they think we should grow, says Christina, then we help each other to pre-cultivate and eventually we plant and sow together.

Most of the people that cultivate here have never cultivated anything before. Some, like Christina, have great skills that they share. All are welcome to participate and grow!

At Urban Gardening Hoegalid, both classic vegetables and berries are



grown such as carrots, beetroots and strawberries. There are also some odd and new plants as *Plantago coronopus*, (known as: Buck's-horn plantain) and *Blitum virgatum*, (known as: Leafy goosefoot), both beautiful to look at and tasting good. The Leafy goosefoot provides both eatable leaves and berries, whilst the leaves of the Buck's-horn plantain have a mild nutty flavour that is perfect in a salad.

The manicured plants have deep green prosperous leaves, berries and fruit. The growers are harvesting beans, cucumbers, beets and chives for all. A light rain is falling, but it doesn't matter much. Soon the sun is shining again, and the growers eat heartily.



*Harvest of the evening*



*Blitum virgatum/Leafy goosefoot*



*Artichoke and Tagetes Linnaeus*



*Turnip cabbage (Kohlrabi/ German turnip)*



*Winter squash on the roof.*



*Salad on the roof*



*Wax beans*



*The forest garden part of the Høeghalid Urban Garden is located below the Church, only a few meters from their roof cultivation.*



*View over the cultivation on the roof.*



# Sweden: Let's join forces

Ulrica Otterling



In times when cities become more dense and existing allotment areas might be threatened by plans to build apartments on the same land, the allotment movement needs to stand up for the need of green and cultivated areas in the cities of the future. Here we have something in common with newer forms of urban gardening. We all want green and sustainable cities. Together we will have a stronger voice, so let's join forces!

In Sweden it is quite common today for city planners or the city gardeners to make an "Urban Gardening Plan". On the positive side allotment areas are always included when they make a survey of existing urban gardens. However, when the city people plan for the future, these plans very seldomly include plans for new allotment areas. In Sweden there is a distinction between allotments with houses and those without, and to be precise, if allotments are included in the future plans it tends to be

allotment areas with plots without houses.

What the city planners focus on are newer forms of urban gardening and we are often talking about programmes with strategies for urban gardening that are marketed, often on a large scale, as a part of making the city sustainable. The fact that new allotment areas often are forgotten as potential part of new areas that are developed is a bit annoying for allotment enthusiasts. However, the new forms of urban gardening show that there is a great interest in gardening and a demand for places to garden out there among people. Wherever people live, they want to have a

space for growing vegetables, flowers or other plants. This is good! Every person who develops an interest in gardening is a potential future allotment holder.

The urban gardeners are not the problem, but the city planners and politicians – the decision makers. The Swedish allotment movement need to become visible for this group of people. We need to open their eyes, so that they start looking at allotment areas as a great way to create lasting green areas. If the houses they build are expected to last about 150-200 years or more, shouldn't the green areas in the neighbourhood also have a potential to last that long? There is a very well tested concept that creates green areas that last more than 100 years – allotment areas. This is what we need to make them realise. Hopefully this will lead to plans for new allotment areas. They should also stop the new trend of giving allotment areas short





5-year leases instead of the traditional 15- to 25-year leases.

Sustainable green areas like allotment gardens bring many benefits to the city environment; biodiversity, better air quality, natural water management, beauty, health, preservation of proper soil in cities, pollution reduction, integration – the list is long.

The allotment areas need to become part of the concept of modern urban gardening as this is what the city planners invest in. Today it seems that allotments are unfortunately considered by these people as something of the past. This needs to change. With all the positive things that allotment areas bring to the cities, the city planners should consider allotments as the fantastic form of urban gardens that they really are.

To try to make its voice heard and to become more visible, the Swedish Allotment Federation is organising the “Stockholm Urban Garden Show” from

8-9 September this year. This will be a garden festival with all the usual ingredients, but it will also be a festival with a message. The theme of the show is “Urban gardening and its place in the cities of the future”. Our aim is to put some focus on this question and create an opportunity for debate and discussions, alongside the festivities. We will also take this opportunity to show the visitors all the positive things that urban gardening brings to the cities.

Everybody who has something to say regarding this topic can participate with a show garden. Our ambition is to have a wide mix of participants. There will also be a space for discussions, “the Idea Square”, where topics will be discussed that we hope will interest people working with city planning etc.

The show ground is close to four allotment areas and some other types of urban gardens. There will be activities in these areas to lure visitors to take a walk through them.

There will be an open-air market where allotment holders / associations and other growers / gardeners can sell their surplus vegetables, plants, honey etc. Companies, organisations and associations can book tents where they can sell garden related products or talk about their work. The show program will be filled with activities throughout the show ground, on the stage and the surrounding allotment areas. We hope all this will interest a lot of visitors and among them, a few city planners.

Not until after the show we will know if we have reached our goal. But I can already say that we have become more visible as every e-mail and phone call we make while organising this event creates a new connection and widens our network. We have also established new contacts with several other urban gardeners as they also want to be able to garden in the cities of the future.

We have joined forces!

# France: French Allotment Gardens in an evolving environment

Hervé Bonnavaud



Portrait of priest Jules Lemire, founder of the French allotment federation in 1896.



Traditional allotment site in Hasbrouck (North of France). The plots are big and entirely dedicated to vegetable cultivation.

## Foreword

For a century, there has been one form of allotment gardens and everybody had a clear view of what it was, what it looked like and who it was meant for. But in the 1990s, new forms of urban gardening appeared in Europe which had been initiated in the USA in the 1980s. This is what makes things difficult for our movement nowadays.

## I – Allotment gardens to feed the poor working-class people (1890 – 1950)

In the 19th century the allotment garden movement was born in a completely different social environment from what it is nowadays. In the northern European countries, the people suffered from the consequences of the industrial revolution. A very large number of agricultural workers were attracted by the jobs that were

offered by the coal, steel and textile industries. These new industrial workers were badly exploited. It is difficult to imagine the conditions they lived in. They worked very long hours for very low wages. Their lodgings were quite small and unhealthy. Tuberculosis was frequent. These people had large families, which they could not feed properly. The men used to drink a lot to forget the hardships of life and they were often violent with their wives and children.

The founders of the allotment garden movement, such as priest Jules Lemire in France or Dr Moritz Schreber in Germany, offered the new emerging working-class plots, whose size was sufficient to feed large families. In France, in the first allotment gardens, the plots were often over 600 m<sup>2</sup>. Some you can still find nowadays

in the Calais and Dunkerque areas, where unemployment and great poverty are present. The inhabitants in these areas mainly feed on the only vegetable they can afford: potatoes. Potatoes often occupy 75% of the whole plot.

In France these AGs were called «Jardins Ouvriers», implying that they were only for working-class people.

In Germany they were called “Schrebergärten” or “Arme-Leute-Gärten”, that is gardens for poor people.

During World War I they developed rapidly: women and old people had to grow food while the young men were fighting on the front.

During World War II, as in many countries (e. g. Victory Gardens in





*“Shanty garden” in Nîmes. Model of a garden that is responsible for the bad image of allotments and everyone wishes its disappearance.*



*Traditional family garden in Versailles, where you can find vegetable and flower cultivation as well as some fruit trees.*



*„Fortified gardens” in the suburb of Paris. They do everything they can to discourage visitors!*



*Jérôme Clément, responsible person for the study department.*

Great-Britain and in the USA) allotment gardens allowed the population to survive when most of the agricultural production was confiscated by the German occupying forces.

In the 19th century and until the 1950s there was enough land available to create allotment gardens inside or around towns and the number of plots was at its highest then.

## **II – Decline of allotment gardens (1950 – 1975)**

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 85% of them were destroyed during these three decades: their number fell from 900,000 at the end of the war to 150,000 nowadays.

In the late 1960s the standards of living of the French population rose rapidly. The workers got paid much better wages and had time to go on holiday to the seaside, the mountains, the country and practice sports. So, they were less dependent upon their plots. The plot holders abandoned their gardens without much struggle.

The remaining sites were rejected to the outskirts of 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.

In the mid-fifties the French Federation changed its name: the « Jardins Ouvriers »(workers' allotment gardens) of the beginnings were replaced by the « jardins familiaux »(family allotment gardens).

## **III – Revival of allotment gardens (1976 – 2018)**

In 1971, a minister for the protection of nature and the environment was appointed for the first time. The creation of this ministry was undoubtedly the symbol of a significant evolution of our society after the excesses of the previous period. An interest for the environment was born and the state and local authorities started to recognize the benefits of AGs for the urban populations. They became aware of the need to preserve them.

The November 10th 1976 agriculture law redefined AGs and made it compulsory for the local authorities to replace the garden sites that had to be destroyed to build public equipments.

### **The number of AGs ceased to fall and stabilized.**

AG sites were better protected then, but at the same time we observed an important pressure from their neighbours to destroy old derelict, ugly-looking sites in the new urban landscape. They were no longer accepted.

Local authorities own most of the land on which new AGs are created and to answer their demand the FNJF decided 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 organise festivities, barbecues ...

Large families being much rarer than earlier, the average size of the plots is thus reduced to 250 m<sup>2</sup>. 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.



*Shared gardens in Boulogne Billancourt (92 - Hauts-de-Seine).*



*Gardens at the bottom of a block of flat houses in Saint Martin-lès-Boulogne (North).*



*A abundant flowering square gardens of the Fontaine d'Ouche in Dijon (21) two months after their inauguration.*



*Since a few days Delphine and Lionel have taken possession of their square garden and already the radishes point their nose.*

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

#### **IV – Emergence of new forms of Urban Gardening: Community Garden**

In New York City, Liz Christy started the first Community Garden in 1973 and headed the Green Guerilla movement, whose aim was to occupy every available piece of free land inside the town to turn it into a place where the neighbours could grow food together.

This movement started to be known in the western countries in the 1980s and new forms of Urban Gardening appeared in Great Britain, the Netherlands and in France in the early 1990s.

The French preferred the phrase “jardins partagés”(shared gardens) instead of Community Gardens for the word “communauté” is associated with social groups, such as immigrants, that tend to be rejected by the native population.

When these « jardins partagés » appeared, they appealed to the local authorities that view them as a means to solve social problems. Our politicians liked the word « partagé » and the « jardins partagés » became, at once, a deadly threat for our traditional allotment gardens. Shared gardens quickly developed in large cities (Paris, Lille, Lyon, Marseille, Nantes, etc). They quickly developed and spread all over the country. In Paris alone, there are more than 100 sites!

It is necessary to describe these two types of Urban Gardens to understand the reasons of that keen interest of politicians for Shared Gardens.

#### **Main differences between Allotment Gardens and Community Gardens / Shared Gardens**

a) Allotment Gardens: An Allotment Garden is a rather large piece of land

(1 or 2 hectares or more), usually owned by the local authorities and leased to an association that generally does not pay any rent. Nowadays the equipments (fence, alleys, tool sheds, water supply, water butts, compost bins, workshop, fruit trees ...) are sometimes provided, totally or partly by the municipality. The land is divided into plots and the plot holders have to pay an annual fee to the association that has so a budget to maintain and improve the site. The statutes and regulations of the association are discussed with the municipality before being voted by the gardeners.

b) Shared gardens: These gardens are often established on land that is meant for future building projects, thus they tend to be ephemeral. The gardeners do not have to sign a contract with an association. They may come and go at any time. Everything is informal: no fee, no individual plots, no equipment. The land on which they settle sometimes does not exceed 100 m<sup>2</sup>. The growing and harvesting of the vegetables are shared between the members. Social relationships are more important than feeding the members who usually belong to the middle class. It seems obvious that these gardens are a long way from the allotment gardens that were imagined by priest Lemire and whose main function was to feed the poor working-class people. Community gardens are based on a political project.



*Several types of plots for disabled people in Quetigny (21).*





*School garden in Mazargues (Marseille).*



*Voluntary gardeners install the beehive in the middle of the pine forest on the Mazargues allotment site.*

## V – Evolution of allotment gardens in France

In the mid-1990s the French Federation realised the importance and the danger of this new type of urban gardens and decided to evolve in order to survive.

The FNJF learnt from the experiment of community gardens and thanks to its Study department (one town planner, one landscape designer and an occasional architect) has designed new types of allotment gardens.

### *The elements that were taken into account:*

- The increase of the population in urban areas;
- The size of families and the evolution of families (single parent families);
- The increase of the life expectancy: there are more and more holders over 80 and the plots and

- equipments have to be adapted;
- The increasing scarcity of available land in towns and its price that allotment gardens cannot afford to pay;
- The new and growing interest of social housing institutions that are now open to the idea of replacing part of the often little used lawns by garden plots. Installing plots at the foot of blocks of flats is a good idea because the land is free and immediately available. This also improves the environment and helps improving social problems;
- The need to open the garden sites to everyone, mainly to women, children, old and disabled people. It was not unusual for men to keep the allotment gardens to themselves so as to have drinks with their friends far from their wives;
- The need to open the sites to the town, to the population at large.

Allotment Gardens at the foot of blocks of flats (*jardins en pieds d'immeubles*): 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 etc. 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 m<sup>2</sup> large, produce vegetables for the low-income dwellers of the flats.

Allotment Gardens on roof tops: In 2001 the FNJF created the first site of Shared Gardens on the 1000 m<sup>2</sup> roof of a multi-storey car park in Boulogne-Billancourt (West of Paris). The plots were 20 m<sup>2</sup> and were separated by paved alleys. There was only one tool shed and the gardeners – most of them being women from African or-

igin – shared the tools. This new type of UAGs (Urban Allotment Gardens) is now developing rapidly in a mineral environment where land is totally absent.

Square gardens: In 2011 the French Federation of AGs was commissioned by the city of Dijon (Burgundy) to develop a new concept of AGs on a 600 m<sup>2</sup> piece of land attached to a Social Center. 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 of gardening at all.

The FNJFC designed a new model: square plots, 1.5 × 1.5 × 0.40 m and filled with compost. 63 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 33 people or families were able to get an AG. Besides this, two raised beds were installed for disabled people in a wheelchair.

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” AGs.

## Conclusion

Nowadays, almost 80 % of the population live in urban or suburban areas. This led us to change our views and to design new models, new forms of AGs to answer the growing needs of this new urban population.

In 2018 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

## Cultiver la cacahuète, c'est possible !

Bien connue en France pour être largement consommée à l'apéritif, grillée et salée, la cacahuète ou arachide est connue dans le monde entier car très présente en cuisine. L'arachide *Arachis hypogaea*, est une légumineuse de la famille des Fabacées. La cacahuète, fruit à coque aussi appelée "pistache", "pistole de terre" ou encore "pistache de terre", est originaire du Mexique.

**A quoi ressemble l'arachide ?**  
Les plants d'arachides font de 30 à 70 cm de haut. Les feuilles sont composées de 4 à 6 folioles ovales. Les fleurs sont jaune pâle à rose-rose et sont très papilionacées car elles ressemblent à un papillon en vol.

Les fruits à coque font de 3 à 4 cm. Ils contiennent généralement deux graines : les cacahuètes.

### Comment la cultiver ?

La germination se fait dans un pot avec du coton ou un godet avec du terreau sans liège, on place une cacahuète qui n'a bien entendu pas été transformée pour l'apéritif. Il faut maintenir le pot au chaud et au sec, entre 22°C et 30°C pendant 18 jours.

Une fois que les cacahuètes ont germé, il faut les placer dans un pot à 2 ou 3 cm de profondeur dans une terre fine.

Lorsque la plante est assez robuste, on la plante en pleine terre, dans un sol bien drainé et pas trop aride (on peut rajouter du sable au fond du trou pour améliorer le drainage). Si le sol est trop lourd ou trop humide, on peut opter pour une plantation sur butte afin d'aérer le pourrissement des racines. L'arachide se plante de fin avril à début mai pour une récolte fin août jusqu'en début d'automne. La culture s'étale donc de 70 à 150 jours.

Leur choisir un emplacement en plein soleil, lorsque l'on est sûr

que les dernières gelées sont passées est l'arachide, bien que très robuste, craint le froid puisqu'elle ne supporte pas les températures inférieures de 5°C. Attention, sous 15°C la journée et 5°C la nuit, il faudra placer une cloche pour conserver la plante au chaud.



Arachide

Les pieds seront espacés de 30 à 40 cm car leurs tiges sont rampantes et les plantes ont besoin d'espace pour se développer.

Non gourmande en eau, un arrosage une fois par semaine suffira. Attention, veiller à bien désherber manuellement autour du plant car elle n'est pas très potagère.

Les fleurs, qui apparaissent un mois après le repiquage, vont progressivement aller s'enfoncer dans le sol pour donner des fruits à coque contenant les fameuses cacahuètes que l'on vendra récoltées.



Arachide

coller en fin d'été ou au début de l'automne lorsque le feuillage sera fané. Suite à la récolte, on laissera les cacahuètes sécher à l'air libre.

**Des variétés différentes**  
Il faut distinguer deux grands types d'arachides regroupant de nombreuses variétés :

- **Arachide Spanish ou Valencia :**  
• legs drassés  
• cycle végétatif moyen (de 90 à 110 jours)  
• rendement plus élevé

- **Arachide Virginiana :**  
• tige volatile et rampante  
• cycle végétatif long (de 120 à 140 jours)  
• résistante à la teigne des feuilles

### A craindre pour l'arachide...

Au risque des maladies, l'arachide craint particulièrement la rosette, maladie transmise par le puceron qui mène à un ramollissement des feuilles, la tordeuse ou la rouille des feuilles liées à trop d'humidité. Se méfier également des acariens, des coléoptères, des cicadelles, des punaises, pucerons et cochenilles qui sont très frands de l'arachide.

### Les petits plus

• Petite particularité : comme toutes les fabacées, l'arachide peut être utilisée comme engrais vert puisqu'elle retient l'azote.  
• L'arachide s'associe très bien avec le sorgho et le millet mais également avec le maïs et la carotte.  
• Riche en protéines végétales.



Malvina Beustair

- 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;
- They want a plot in a collective AG 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 AGs are multiple: economical (food production), therapeutic, educational, ecological, social etc. AGs are a great contribution to the quality of life in large cities.

## The last evolution

In 2006 the FNJF added the word « collectifs » at the end of its name to become the FNJFC: Fédération Nationale des Jardins Familiaux et Collectifs. The word collectifs (collective in English) is, in a way, the equivalent of Community and shows that the French Federation has clearly moved from the old model of Allotment Gardens meant for a specific class of the population to more inclusive Urban Gardens.

The more recently created sites often include a pond, a school plot, raised beds for the disabled people, a recreation ground, tables and benches around a common barbecue, beehives etc. and even a chicken run or a Garden of Scents for blind people!



# Belgium: Types of allotment gardens & community gardens in the Belgian federation

Daan Van de Vijver, Tuinhier



## Definition of an allotment garden

A large plot of land divided into smaller gardens that are tended to by gardeners. The garden is used for the cultivation of vegetables, fruit and flowers. Usually there is a fee to be paid. The plots are organised by a local board.

## Definition of a community garden

Most community gardens are centred around cities, the plots are often smaller and all the gardeners work together on one plot. All the gardeners have

an equal voice in the decision-making. The gardens are also used to grow vegetables, fruit and flowers.

## From the Belgian point of view these are the ups and downs of both types:

### Downsides of community gardens are

- There are only three active gardeners and eight who pick the yields.
- They lack organisation, rules and financial means
- They are rather small
- They tend to have a shorter life span

### Upsides of community gardens

- They attract a lot of young people
- They are easy to create
- They are cheap
- There is a lot of positive energy in the starting period
- They get a lot of press attention
- There are a lot of creative ideas
- They are easy to combine with other partner organisation / social projects
- They fill the void of the large waiting lists for allotment gardens







**Downsides of an allotment garden**

- There are often large waiting lists
- Young people are difficult to attract
- They are often unwieldy for change
- They demand more management
- The costs are higher
- It is a more individualistic approach



**Upsides of an allotment garden**

- The plots are larger
- They offer more activities
- They are organised
- They have a local board running financial, political, etc. business
- They are durable

Tuinhier still has the traditional allotment gardens but lacking large plots of ground and with shifting interests of the younger generations, the new parks become a melting pot between the two systems. Also, in science a combined system is often the best. It lifts the downsides of both and combines the advantages that both offer. As a result, Tuinhier creates gardens / parks that are a mixture of both.

A new park in Flanders has individual garden plots and adds several shared plots, e. g. for chicken, larger crops like pumpkins, an herb garden, rose garden, orchard, etc.

We offer rules and propose a division of tasks among the gardeners. We create a local board that channels the interesting ideas of all gardeners. Our allotment gardens became a lot smaller throughout the years, but the advantage is that we create a lot more of the new parks per year. We work together with the local authorities. This partnership makes the projects a lot more durable. With an active local board, we also guarantee the continuation of this partnership.

As an organisation we are often contacted by a group of people that started off or wishes to start a community garden. Most of the time they wish advice and we try to help them out. We offer advice to members for free, from non-members we collect a certain fee or we ask them to join our organisation.

**We offer the following advices:**

- We help writing recruitment texts and survey for interest
- Help in planning:
- Support in creating a local board

- Help to prepare meetings and guide them
- Prepare the budget / estimate
- Prepare an action plan and a time schedule
- Support and write subsidy files
- Find / search for partners
- Info sessions
- Advice for making contracts
- Consultation with partners, neighbourhood, etc.
- Offer basic documents:
  - action plan
  - regulation
- Materials, sketches, etc:
  - Make the plan / sketches
  - Terrain study
- Visit reference parks
- Advice for materials
- Offer workshops







### Tuinhier organises six larger types of allotment gardens:

#### *Classic park*

The first types of parks are the older ones. In these parks we get individual gardens mostly separated by hedges and with a garden shed for their materials. Most of these gardens have 100 – 200 m<sup>2</sup>. To gather these people there is often a chalet where they can get a drink and exchange experiences.

Among these classic parks we have some that only do floriculture. Most of the time, this is obligatory because the soil is polluted. There are public parks and private parks.

#### *Newer trends in classic parks*

The second types are the newer and more modern parks. Each gardener has his own private garden; the rest of the park is shared among all the gardeners. So, they have a mutual shed, greenhouse, composting area, chalet, chicken coop, etc. Each park is different, they all offer different ex-

tras. The average garden measures between 30-100 m<sup>2</sup>. The newer parks are mostly public parks.

#### *Samentuin / shared garden*

A third type, which is less common in our federation, is the one where all the gardeners work together in one garden. So, the work and the yield are shared among all the gardeners. Most of these gardens are centred in cities and are rather small in size.

#### *Social gardens*

Often in social projects, where we work together with CPAS or other organisations, the need for elevated gardens arises. They are wheelchair friendly and an ergonomic way of gardening for the older generation. We also use the elevated gardens in school gardens, so that every student has his own m<sup>2</sup>.

#### *Greenhouse allotments*

The Belgian federation is studying if it is possible to start allotment gardens in professional greenhouses. There are certain areas in Flanders where there used to be a lot of agriculture in greenhouses. Most of those smaller companies had to quit because of the competition from larger companies. These empty greenhouses are often broken down or used as car storages. Hopefully we can soon start our first projects. The advantages of these allotment gardens are: the growth season is much longer, you can also grow more tropical species, it is a much more controlled area and you can work in the garden when it is raining or windy. Some of these greenhouses still have elevated tables that can be used again as ergonomic gardens.

Problems that we are still facing are the insurance and safety, urban and regional planning conflicting with these projects and the higher rent costs for these gardens.

#### *Therapeutic gardens*

Therapeutic gardens are gardens that provide extra services for people with

specific needs, such as people needing wheelchairs or people with mental disabilities. Another possibility is that these gardens stimulate the senses such as smell, sight, feeling etc. Sanatoria and rehabilitation centres make use of these gardens for people that can't take care of a garden themselves. People from the neighbourhood perform the maintenance in some of these gardens.

#### **Other allotment gardens or community gardens in Belgium:**

##### *Rooftop gardens*

The shop Delhaize has a rooftop garden on top of a store. All the cultivated crops are directly sold in the shop below.

<http://www.delhaize.be/press-overview>: [From the rooftop garden straight to the shop Delhaize is the first Belgian retailer to have a vegetable garden on its supermarket roof](#)







In Ghent there is a project that produces food on the roof of firms. The food is used in a local catering.

<https://rooffood.be/nl>

Both examples are no real allotment gardens since they serve commercial goals and the gardens are not open for the neighbourhood.

#### ***Vegetable museum / show garden***

't Grom is a museum which shows some regional cultivation manners and its history. They also have a garden in which they show good practices and old vegetable species. There is a small allotment garden in this project where they cultivate vegetables in a historical way.

<https://www.tgrom.be/>

#### ***Picking gardens***

The members of these gardens don't work in the garden themselves. As the name suggests they pick the vegetables and fruit in the garden. They pay

a certain yearly fee and in return they can pick as much as they like.

#### ***Permaculture***

Permaculture is an ecological spin-off. To garden they use principles that can be found in nature. Their golden rule is the right plant on the right spot. Plants that grow well in the shadow will be put under fruit trees and so on.

<https://yggdra.be/>

#### ***Demonstration gardens***

Some associations do not have the necessary space for an allotment garden. So, they start a demo-garden where they can give workshops and show good practices. They are also often used to experiment with new techniques or species.

#### ***Box gardens***

In larger cities, box gardens are used. Gardeners rent a box or bigbag as a garden. Most of the time, these boxes are one m<sup>2</sup> large.

# Luxembourg: “Matgesfeld” in Belvaux: a model site

David HENGEN,

president of the allotment association „Amis de la fleur Belvaux”



We would like to introduce you to this communal garden, because a novel concept makes the “Matgesfeld” garden unique amongst all those others in Luxembourg.

Since the 2017 gardening season, the horticultural association “Amis de la fleur Belvaux”, a member of the Luxembourgish allotment federation, has been able to provide its members with garden plots of a new design for Luxembourg.

“Matgesfeld”, within the locality of Belvaux, was already at the core of the master plan for a sustainable gardening operation in the community of Sarnem developed in 2016. It is a green interface between urban space and open countryside, with excellent links to existing roads. An ideal place for developing activities, holding meet-

ings and supporting integration activities. Is anything more suitable for this than a garden?

The planning aimed at integrating the garden and its infrastructures into the existing landscape. As a result, one abstained from fencing and the association’s bylaws banned all plastic elements on site. The permeable pathways and the dry stacked stone walls combined with the ban on pesticides and artificial fertilizers have resulted in an ecological garden. Rainwater is collected from the adjacent hall roof and dispensed via a hand pump.

In contrast to the traditional allotments, the 28 square garden plots (7 × 7 m) are solely for cultivation. The surrounding green area is for communal use and relaxation and is equipped with a picnic bench, a clay

oven, a barbecue and an herb spiral. There are also two tool sheds in this area. In these sheds, gardening tools can be secured in individual boxes. The compost and the waterless composting toilet are for shared use. The concept is based on an optimal use of the existing area together with the creation of a large number of plots and the stimulation of social interaction.

Not only has the fact that the garden has no fence and that many strollers walk through it regularly made it an extremely open space. The garden has additional features making it accessible to all: the existing raised bed is built specifically for wheelchair users; an adapted toilet and the chicken coop are accessible with walker or wheelchair.

Six plots are reserved for schools and



consequently the garden also plays an educational role. The neighbouring French municipality of Rédange makes full use of this opportunity. However, it is also the diverse origins of the users that help making the garden an intercultural location.

Another interesting feature is apparent from a glance at the list of tenants: from young families, singles, elderly singles to groups of friends, all ages and household types are present. In

addition, there could not be a greater variety of profiles in terms of experience in producing vegetables. This proves that all these people respond to a novel model for gardens. This, in turn, encourages the development of further alternatives of collective garden types.

Science is not either neglected in this garden. As an example, young innovators developed the first garden robot in Luxembourg, which was installed

on a raised bed and put into service. The aim of the project is less the tilling of the bed than programming the equipment. However, once the system is fully set up, the robot will be able to sow, water, weed and loosen up the soil autonomously. The goal is to show on small plots that horticulture can be innovative and high-tech. Here is a completely new approach to marvel at!

# Germany: We are urban gardening

Werner Heidemann,

Director of the national allotment federation Westphalia-Lippe

Public green spaces in the city (urban green) have been showing a multifaceted face for an immemorial time. Public parks, avenues, green spaces and typical allotments belong to the well-known forms of green spaces. For a number of years small gardens in various forms have increasingly come into the public spotlight. More and more citizens want to actively experience on their doorstep, feel and tackle their green space. This is how new social currents arise: for example, urban gardening in crates and raised beds on vacant plots waiting for construction, self harvest gardens and citizen gardens. They all offer a platform to start gardening to new hobby gardeners. How can it be that more and more people are rediscovering self-sufficiency from the garden, while consumers are constantly flooded by fruit, vegetables, flowers and spices from the big markets all around the world? The new gardener is much more interested than only by “cheap, quick and anonymous cool products” bought in the supermar-

ket. He is much more concerned by a self experienced, specific cultivation, by freshness, quality, taste, love of gardening, colorfulness and colorful scents.

It is also about short distances between home and garden, social breaks in society, new poverty as well as immigration and associated with this comes a change in the leisure interest that changes the landscape of the gardens.

Politicians and some experts often dress this new garden development in a simple black and white scheme: Here on one side the conventional garden forms such as allotments and privately-owned gardens, and there on the other side the new garden forms such as community gardens, self harvest gardens, guerilla gardening or intercultural gardens.

This division into “new” and “old” is not very helpful. In fact: the roots of allotment gardening date back 200

years. So far, it is “old and rich in experiences”. One should carefully deal with this treasure of green diversity and avoid the mistake of equating old traditions with stuffiness and simplicity and contrasting the new emerging trends as innovative and imaginative.

## Conclusion

The “urban garden” does not exist, but rather a multiplicity of large and small projects with different emphases.

15,000 allotment associations offer a lot of potential in terms of “urban gardening” with their allotment sites.

Whether it should be temporary taster gardens, cooperation with nursing homes and old people’s homes, nature conservation and youth gardens – we have the areas at our disposal, we have the association managing and designing them and the allotment gardeners who are ready for experimenting and finding new ways. – We are urban gardening!



# Germany: Gardening in the City: Allotment Gardens and Urban Gardening

GALK (Gartenamtsleiterkonferenz, conference of the directors of the division for parks and gardens) work group – Allotment garden movement, April 2016

Gardening in the city is nothing new, allotment gardens have existed since the 19th century. They serve as non-commercial gardens, mainly for cultivation of fruit and vegetables for own consumption, but also as a recreational activity. Allotments are grouped together in a complex with common facilities, featuring such amenities as paths, playgrounds and associative homes.

The concept of “urban gardening”, a new form of gardening in the city, has developed nationwide in recent years. Urban Gardening involves mostly small-scale, open, shared gardening operations in urban areas. Overall, the focus is on sustainable cultivation of garden crops, environmentally friendly practices and sensible consumption of agricultural products. However, the “gardening in the city” theme often includes cultural, therapeutic, social, ecological and political aspects. Depending on the purpose, a variety of forms of urban gardening are practiced in the cities:

- Community, neighbourhood and district gardens, intercultural gardens
- Gardening in the road space, involving street landscaping or planting at the base of trees
- Cultivation of vacant lots, fallow land and city squares
- Projects in public gardens
- Crop gardens on the outskirts of the city (Urban Farming)
- Educational and environmental

projects such as school gardens. Urban gardening and the allotment gardening projects are not in competition with each other. On the contrary, they complement each other, as the goals of Urban Gardening are largely identical to those of allotment gardening.

#### *These include:*

- Encourage self-sufficiency through local production of healthy fruit and vegetables
- Communicate the pleasure of gardening
- Familiarise city children with food production processes
- Co-design urban landscapes
- Assume responsibility together
- Act as good neighbours
- Meet like-minded people
- Provide a bond between generations
- Challenge the environmental awareness of the participants
- Create a space to meet
- Promote integration

Cooperation is especially conceivable in projects where the focus is on voluntary, community-based and non-commercial action and where no commercial or political objectives are pursued. Then no conflicts with the requirements of the Federal Allotment Garden law arise.

#### *Collaboration is possible through:*

- Integration of projects on an allotment site on one parcel (especially if there are vacancies) or in

a common area, like in a green space

- Establishment of special plots for bees, school, senior or kindergarten activities
- garden plots to try out gardening
- Cooperation through expert advice and events
- Cooperation in public relations

If the project is integrated into an allotment site, a supplementary intermediate lease is recommended. There has to be a permanent contact person or an association for the project. Agreements relating to the use of the area must be concluded dealing with:

- The lease, public charges and operating costs
- Legality of constructions
- Participation in community work
- Returns at the end of the project

Municipalities can support the interaction of urban gardening and allotment gardening as follows:

- Provide areas
- Offer longer-term leases for projects or integrate them into an intermediate lease
- Take them in account in allotment garden development plans
- Put on joint events
- Provide financial and functional support of projects

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