



Hyphen 76

News from the Federation

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Putting common „gardening” in the foreground ... new area “Sarnen”

Otmar Halfmann, president SFGV/FSJF



Site plan

One would hardly expect a new family garden area to be built in an alpine valley, where the association already conceptually envisaged an orientation towards the community and gardening activities in the context of the association. Sarnen is an example of how to avoid old mistakes in the construction and layout of a new area and how to avoid many a problem that causes headaches for honorary board members today.

Many, especially large areas with several hundred plots complain about the fragmentation or even granulation of the association idea and the withdrawal of tenants to their plot or ghetto formations, which [can] be further reinforced by ethnic and cultural diversity.

Thank goodness, the experimental concepts of the younger generation for communal gardening - e.g. in Berlin and other metropolises - are once again putting more emphasis on collective activity and not on plot fencing [demarcation ...] and the conversion of a garden house into a vacation domicile.

After having to vacate the old site in „Sarnen” in 2018, the president, Josef Kammermann, a „rock” in our Swiss family garden movement, succeeded in obtaining from the municipal authorities involved, ½ ha of leased land for a new garden site as a compensation area. Moreover, Josef Kammermann with his board was even able to politically fix the use of this ½ ha in the local spatial planning as a designated „allotment garden area”.

The new area - „sandwiched” between the Sarner Lake with an area of more than 7.0 km² and the new construction of a retirement home - was divided into 49 plots. At the entrance the clubhouse was built. On the plots, conventional construction kits for the tool sheds and the greenhouses of a carpenter, who is also a tenant, were tested. The decision was clearly in favour of the locally made tool sheds.

Of course, not every club is lucky enough to have real craftsmen in its ranks, but one should still generally think more about whether, instead of maintenance-intensive „building quality” from the „DIY” shelf, it would not be better to commission a local timber construction company to manufacture weatherproof tool sheds or greenhouses.

The clubhouse is simple but at the same time impressive and a point of attraction for the members: here one meets coincidentally for a chat and naturally common or also family festivities take place only there. In the “Bernese Oberland”, members of the association dismantled in „drudgery” an army shelter that had been cleared for demolition, a wooden structure that was certainly more than a hundred years old. All usable elements were transported to „Sarnen” and the hut was rebuilt as a clubhouse in the entrance area of the site. Also in the interior the old wooden architecture conveys a special atmosphere.



Topping-out ceremony of the clubhouse

The cultivation is rigorously oriented towards natural practices, and thanks to long-standing members, a platform of experience is also available to show new tenants for ways of achieving decent yields without chemicals, not only for vegetables and berries, but also for fruit cultivation.

„Sarnen“ shows that a compact area with a focus on the cultivation of crops, the consideration of past experiences and the orientation of social activities towards an attractive meeting place for all members limit the risks and problems that accumulate in many areas that have existed for decades, because one has been too generous with the development of a „fan“ of leisure needs and their diverse



Standard plot

- also structural – “forms of expression” on the individual plot that can no longer be handled by volunteers.

After the inspiring example from Switzerland presented as an introduction on how the federations’ strategies for the future can be implemented, follow now additional innovative and forward-looking examples from other associations.

Malou Weirich



Clubhouse - wood details



Expert in fruit cultures

Norway: The allotment garden site “Sogn” in Oslo

Storm water management project in Sogn Allotment Garden, Oslo, Norway



1 Extreme rains stress testing the recently installed raingardens.

How to handle extreme rains in a sustainable manner by applying nature-based, blue-green¹ solutions: A living, learning lab co-developed by allotment gardeners, research institutions and the City of Oslo.

In 2018, Sogn Allotment Garden, centrally located in Norway's capital Oslo, and NIVA (the Norwegian Institute for Water Research), together with life sciences and water management institutions, including the City of Oslo represented by the Agency for Water and Wastewater Services, initiated a collaboration project and initiative called Sogn Hagelab (Sogn Garden lab)² to co-develop, demonstrate and test nature-based, blue-green storm water management solutions on-site in the Allotment Garden (picture1).

Storm water runoff is generated from rain and snowmelt events in areas with impervious surfaces, such as paved streets, parking lots and roofs. Impervious surfaces hinder infiltration of the water, thus cause excess water on the surface – storm water runoff. Seemingly more frequent intensive rainfall events coupled with densification in urban areas due to e.g. increased housing and road construction has strengthened the need for new approaches and solutions to avoid storm water flooding of properties, roads and common areas in many neighborhoods. The board and members of the Sogn allotment garden therefore welcomed the opportunity to enter in to a practical, on-site research project in collaboration with leading water management institutes in Norway, to investigate blue-green solutions for storm water management.

The main objective was to develop, test and maintain different multipurpose blue-green storm water solutions for demonstration and learning through co-creation and participatory approaches, and share results and new knowledge with allotment gardeners, private garden owners, as well as city planners and research institutes.

In the project Sogn allotment garden contributes with volunteers, gardening and local knowledge, plant donations, testing and demonstration areas. NIVA carries out research and knowl-

edge transfer (self-financing) and project coordination. The Norwegian University of Life Science (NMBU) contributes with guidance of master student projects and knowledge transfer (self-financing). The City of Oslo has provided funding and contributes with knowledge transfer and dissemination opportunities. Construction entrepreneurs have been involved in the building of the structures, and there has been interest from suppliers to contribute with hardware and materials (on varying commercial terms). Other finance partners, such as the Savings Bank Foundation DNB and Hageselskapet, through the Olaf Billes donorship foundation, have contributed to various communications, research and testing as well as other activities.

The project has gathered widespread interest nationally and internationally and created a strong community feeling amongst the participants. Even more importantly, the blue-green structures so far seem to have positively impacted the storm water distribution in the common areas, as well as provided an opportunity to learn about nature-based approaches to storm water management.

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2 Logo NIVA (The Norwegian Institute for Water Research)



3 Sogn Hagekoloni (Sogn allotment garden)



4 Sogn Hagelab

In this presentation, we would like to share some of our experiences from the Sogn Garden lab project, take you on a tour of the blue-green solutions and structures, and give you some ideas that could hopefully work in your allotment gardens. The blue-green solutions in Sogn allotment garden not only capture and delay storm water in order to avoid flooding, but

also endure dry spells and use storm water as resource in the landscape providing multiple benefits (e. g. esthetics, biodiversity).

The project has received important support from the City of Oslo which is addressing management of storm water and benefits of a blue-green city in their Storm water Management Strategy (<https://www.oslo.kommune.no/vann-og-avlop/arbeider-pa-vann-og-avlopsnettet/overvannshandtering/>). Especially the city's Agency for Water and Wastewater Services has been a key partner in the practical design and implementation of the stormwater solutions within the project. A key driver for the project's timing and progress as well as funding has been Oslo's role as European Green Capital in 2019. The research and experimental designs attracted several international conferences on Water Management, Urban Architecture and other related topics. Sogn Allotment Garden also acted as the venue for open public events and study trips and research gatherings during 2019 (and continues to do so). Since then, other international media and visitors have come to learn and share in the experiences from the project.

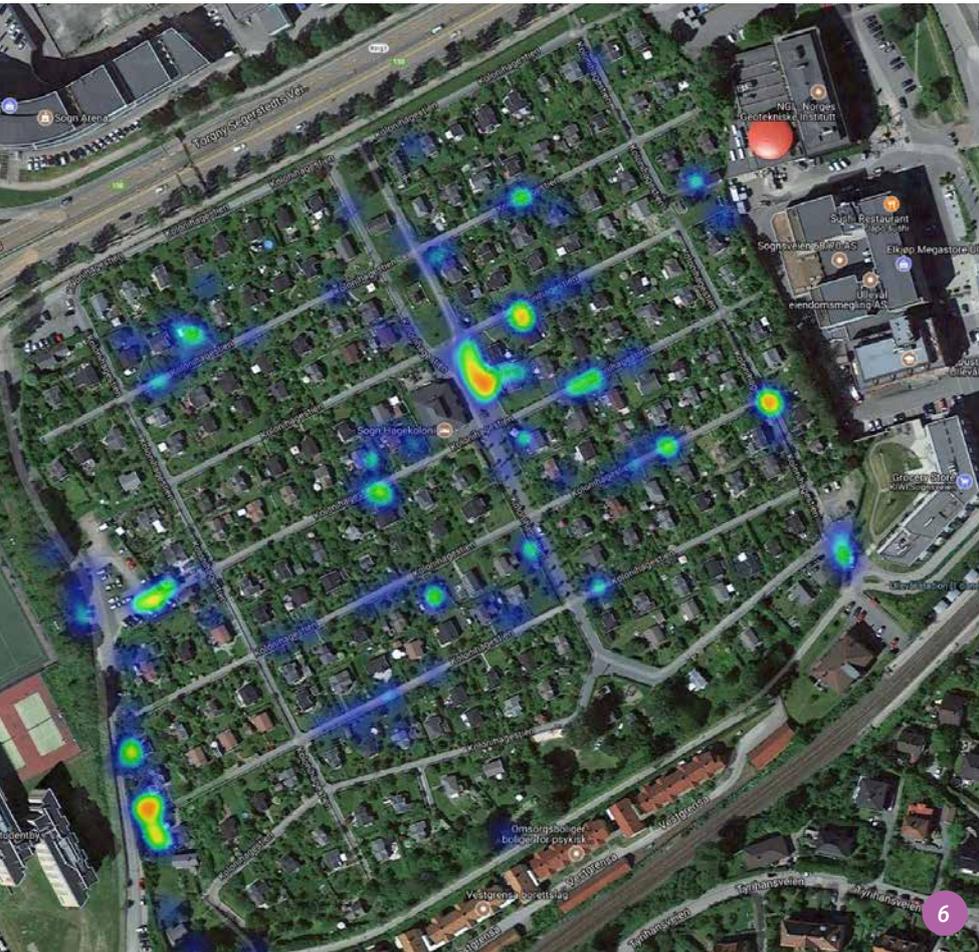
Further details may be obtained by contacting: sogn@kolonihager.no, attn: Bente Mogård: line.barkved@niva.no (picture 2, 3, 4)

Sogn Allotment Garden in brief

- Established in 1923
- Centrally located in Oslo, the capital of Norway
- 204 allotments (the largest in Norway)
- Covering approx. 20 acres, average plot ~270 m²
- Maximum cottage size 32 m² (local council planning regulations)
- 5.5 km of white picket fences surround the individual gardens
- More than 1000 fruit trees and 1500 berry shrubs, innumerable flowers, vegetables and herbs
- Bees, cats and dogs, birds, deer (not our favourite visitors), turtles (always escaping, but won't get very far) and slugs (not so welcome either)
- Some hundred eager gardeners and happy kids
- Lots of visitors – Sogn allotment garden is a public park open for all during the season which runs from April 1 through October 31
- Sogn allotment garden is part of the Oslo Allotment Garden society and the Norwegian Allotment Garden Association. The grounds are rented from the City of Oslo. Sogn allotment garden is surrounded by a 4-lane highway, several major tube/underground lines, the national soccer stadium, and the University of Oslo, Norway's largest university. (picture 5)



5 Partial view of Sogn Hagekoloni



to suggest areas and explain why these areas should have blue-green structures. In addition, accessibility for demonstration and learning were important factors for the choice of test areas (picture 7), as were convenience for management and day-to-day maintenance.

Furthermore, the project aimed at establishing a shared arena which could have multiple purposes, providing value for the local community, research and local authorities. A key to the success was involvement from several key stakeholders (picture 8, 9). NIVA's research program, potential impact and effectiveness, amount of volunteer work and commercial resources required were amongst important issues to be resolved.

As part of the project, plants were sourced locally (picture 10). The initial garden plant design needed some adjustments in order to select plants that could be donated from the plot owners (in sufficient amounts), but also plants that would fulfill the purpose and potentially withstand the changing conditions (heavy rains alternating with dry and sunny spells).



Joining forces: Mapping trouble spots, selecting test areas and planning plant donations

The allotment gardeners were directly involved in the process of mapping and co-designing potential storm water interventions, as well as hands-on implementation of most of them. The initial phase of the project built on a survey involving all allotment gardeners to map problem areas, i. e. areas where water gathers and stays after heavy rainfalls and runoff (picture 6). An important task was also to map and consider areas where blue-green structures might be implemented, so the allotment gardeners were asked

6 The brighter the color on the map, the more rainwater causes flooding of the marked area

7 Infiltration measure equipment

Building site-specific blue-green structures – Initial considerations

The ground in Sogn allotment garden is mainly clay (loam) -based, which at many places causes water to infiltrate poorly. This is more demanding when constructing storm water structures on the ground and requires extra work. Hence it requires substantial preparation to act as filter medium in blue-green structures. Efforts were made in the project to also reuse existing soil mass when possible, but some soil needed to be changed, and furthermore drainage below the blue-green landscape structures were needed. The groundwater level at Sogn is in many places only a few decimeters below the surface, which also makes water absorption in the ground difficult. For construction of the larger



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8 Meeting between key stakeholders



9

9 Contractor and Sogn's head beekeeper discussing work in the beehive area

blue-green structures, hiring outside contractors and machinery was costly, but necessary (picture 11, 12, 13)! Multidisciplinary knowledge was critical, and the importance of working together across disciplines and sectors became important, but also challenging. We experienced that construction of blue-green structures was new to many construction companies and their employees.



10

10 Workshop to study planting suggestion and organize donations

The plants used in the rain gardens and infiltration structures were a mix of purchased plants and donations (cuttings and mother plants) from allotment plots (picture 14). A benefit of sourcing locally and transplanting is that the plants were available and can be expected to be robust and suitable for the location and climate. It also saved us money as opposed to purchasing plants from garden centers or nurseries. Less positive was that several plants and cuttings were infiltrated with weeds, which required dedicated cleaning of the root structures.

Different types of blue-green solutions established at multiple places in Sogn allotment garden

An ambition of the Sogn Garden Lab is to serve as a demonstration and learning arena to show and combine different types of blue-green solutions, including landscape structures. So, a set of different structures were implemented on various sites in the common areas (picture 15). Different types of rain gardens and infiltration structures, as well as a wetland and green roofs was implemented in the common areas, while water barrels for rainwater harvesting were installed on some private plots and common facilities. These are all blue-green solutions that use the storm water as a resource.

Rain gardens

A **rain garden** is a depressed area in the landscape that collects rainwater from a roof or street and allows it to soak into the ground. It is a planted depression built **with a filter medium and dedicated plants**, where storm water can infiltrate and be delayed. Such structures come in different sizes and shapes. A rain garden typically holds water during and following a rainfall event but is dry most of the time. So, plants need to endure both much wa-



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11 The green roofs were laid out as a community event

12 Construction of the large rain gardens in Sogn's main square

13 Construction crew

14 Plant donations with donor tags

ter and dry periods. The rain garden built on the main common area captures rainwater and storm water runoff from the flat and dense clay area and paths leading into the square (picture 16, 17, 18).

Due to the loam ground in Sogn, there is a drainage pipe below the rain gardens that slowly transports excess



15

15 Map with the different rain gardens structures

16 Main rain bed with initial planting

17 Leading the stormwater into the main rain garden bed

18 New planting, not yet with flowers showing



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17



18

water to a dedicated area for infiltration. This required quite extensive construction work and the involvement of heavy machinery and construction companies.

In a sloped area in the allotment garden, a rain garden is constructed as **a terraced rain garden** to prevent erosion (picture 19). Here we also experiment with edible herbs and plants. Connected to this rain garden, at the end of the slope, we have constructed a **pocket wetland**, a structure where there will always be some standing water (picture 20). In the constructed wetland special wetland plants are needed. The combination of a rain garden and wetland is unique, and especially interesting for both research and public management.

We are also testing a **mini rain garden** in a stand-alone box that captures roof water from one of the downspouts from the main common building, as an example of a small-scale blue-green solution that delays and uses storm water (picture 21).

Green roofs

As part of a community event, we have installed green roof on two of our common buildings (picture 22). Sedum can endure both dry periods as well as captures and holds back rainwater and as such slows down the runoff from roofs (picture 23). Green roofs are also positive for biodiversity. Data from our roofs show how they can help regulate indoor temperature.

Water barrels

are a small-scale measure to delay and use rainwater for plants (picture 24). This may be an alternative to using scarce drinking water for plant watering. Water from the barrels usually also holds a better temperature for plants.

Hands-on: Learning together

“The best learning comes from working together and taking part in the actual planting”(quote from a Sogn allot-

ment gardener). An important aspect of the project was to engage the plot owners and ensure their support for the activities short and long term. In order to both involve the gardeners and stretch the budget, a lot of the plants were resourced from the allotment plots, according to a “wish list”. With strong involvement from the gardeners a landscape architect at NIVA suggested plant lists and maps with additional input from NMBU, NINA and the Agency for Water and Wastewater Services. A set of criteria such as climate, robustness, maintenance, biodiversity, esthetics and suggestive plants were iteratively discussed and formed the basis of the plant choices. Mother plants and cuttings were identified with their origin (who donated, from which plot, is there a story to carry on) (picture 25, 26, 27). This turned out to be quite a big coordination task and quite demanding, but also a lot of fun. We held several “plant feasts” with food and drink, inspiring talks and lot of people show-

19 The pocket wetland garden is planted mainly with lilies, irises and grasses

20 The terrace rain garden is constructed to test out a multi-level rain garden



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21 Mini rain garden is planted with annuals to test effect on root filtration

22 Testing how the green roof regulates indoor temperature

23 Green roof planting with sedum varieties

24 Green house with water barrel on one allotment plot

ing up, eager to contribute (picture 28, 29, 30). The general mood was one of “I want to contribute and participate – this is fun, and we can work together on something very meaningful”. Also, NMBU contributed with expertise and plant material from their own gardens at the university premises.

Sharing and learning, dissemination and information

The project period coincided with a number of research conferences held in Oslo in 2019, when Oslo was named the European Green Capital. Several international conferences and meetings used Sogn allotment gardens as part of their field trips, including researchers involved in storm water management, city planning, architecture and others (picture 31, 32). Students have also been actively engaged in the project through internships, course and thesis work.

A key focus has also been to involve the general public, as well as school children (picture 33). Several school classes have come to learn and experiment firsthand with structures such as green roofs. Newspaper articles (picture 34), community groups, a TV-team from Chile (picture 35), and a number of research articles are among the information and sharing platforms. In addition, an Instagram account linked to the Sogn garden lab called “sognhagelab” (picture 35) updates the audience on the development and details of the structures and surroundings, intended to inspire to more learning and further studies.

Key learnings

Some of the experiences and learnings that we have had in the project so far:

- Storm water management and nature-based solutions requires interdisciplinary and multi-actor collaboration. At the same time, collaboration between different parties adds to the management and coordination complexity



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25 Plant donations arriving by wheelbarrow

26 Plant donation card

27 Plant donation card

- Engagement, ownership and influence by allotment owners is essential for project success including maintenance and follow-ups, as well as the sustained life of the initiative as such
- Meeting all objectives of all partners involved is not always possible, but it is important to fill at least a minimum of the partners’ respective needs for a fruitful collaboration benefiting research, the local community



- and governmental players
- Experimenting and demonstrating effects of at the same time can be challenging, as well as having to accept that “work in progress” does not always go hand in hand with aesthetic expectations
- The core team (consisting of the key partners) must have sufficient authority and a flexible attitude throughout the various phases of the project
- Communication and information require dedicated resources both for internal knowledge transfer as well as public engagement. Both storm water management and nature-based solutions are topics that still need to be contextualized (why, what, where) to make it relevant and understandable and facilitation and enabling such knowledge and learning is essential, but also requires dedicated resources

- Financial resources are needed for such a collaborative project, it cannot be based on solely voluntary efforts
- Selection of plants – what seems suitable on paper needs to be tested locally over several years
- The “future success”, including the responsibility and resources for the maintenance of the physical structures and planting needs to be addressed early on in the project.

- 28 Trying to sort out who donated what!*
- 29 The younger ones were eager participants in the plant feast*
- 30 The terraced rain garden is planted with herbs and edible plants*
- 31 Information material developed for Sogn Hagelab (Sogn Garden lab)*
- 32 Inviting the public to learn more about the storm waterproject*



Etter styrtregn og flom kan resten av Oslo lære vannhåndtering av Sogn hagekoloni

— Hvordan skal vi oppbevare oss påvillig styrtregn, og hvilke er det vi har sett nå bare planter i fermetid? Det er kun 12. advener spåregner i vann- og avløpsplan. Bent Bråtenrud

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- 33 School children learning about stormwater management*
- 34 Article from Vårt Oslo newspaper*
- 35 Visitors from a TV-station in Chile coming to study the rain gardens*

The allotment garden site “Sogn” in Oslo received the International Federation’s diploma for innovative projects.



36 Lecturing on the principles of the rain garden structure

Further reading

Sogn Allotment garden: <https://www.sognhagekoloni.no/>

Sogn Hagelab, publications and presentations: <https://www.sognhagelab.no/>

Glimpses of Sogn Hagelab in Media:

Oslo can learn about Water Management from Sogn Allotment garden. Vårt Oslo, 11.09.19

<https://vartoslo.no/adriana-bertet-amalie-sofie-aune-bjerkem-anita-glittum/etter-styrtregn-og-flom-kan-resten-av-oslo-laere-vann-handtering-av-sogn-hagekoloni/212123>

Heavy Rains and Floods in Cities: We can learn from Nature. Research Days 2019, 13.09.19 <https://www.forskningsdagene.no/artikler/styrtregn-og-flom-i-byer-vi-kan-lre-av-naturen! t-7374>

An Interesting Rain garden in Oslo (Norway). Video from the Documentary Desafio 2030,

aired on Chilean TV 13.01.20. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QyyfLCaNwJE>

City of Oslo's Storm water Management plans and strategies:

<https://www.oslo.kommune.no/overvann>

<https://www.oslo.kommune.no/politics-and-administration/green-oslo/plans-and-programmes/>

¹ Sweltering temperatures, urban heat islands, impermeable surfaces, flooding and air pollution all pose severe threats to the health and stability of our cities.

The Blue Green philosophy provides crucial insights and solutions into how cities can harness the power of nature to meet the challenges of today.

²The Norwegian word « hage » means « garden » and « lab » means « laboratorium ». So the word « Sogn Hagelab » could be translated by « the lab of the Sogn Garden ».

In order to stick to the Norwegian term we will systematically use the word « Sogn Hagelab » in this article.

The Netherlands: The garden park Nieuw Vredelust from Amsterdam-Duivendrecht

Quality mark for Nieuw Vredelust

Photos taken by Efendi Mohamat unless otherwise noted.



Entrance

“Nieuw Vredelust”(New Vredelust) is a garden park in Amsterdam-Duivendrecht with 103 gardens, founded in 1960 and originated from the Vredelust gardens, which at the time had to make way for the construction of the Amsterdam Prison.

In 2018, “Nieuw Vredelust” started with the project Quality Mark Natural Gardening. In October 2020 they were awarded with a Quality Mark Shield which contained a ladybug (symbol of natural gardening) with 4 dots – the highest possible. That’s a fine result for a garden park that, as an oasis of biodiversity, is sandwiched between motorway, sports facilities and industrial sites.

Green Lockdown

In 2020, a year in which we all dealt with the restrictions regarding covid-19, the garden park turned out to



Petra de Nijs

Natural Playground

be for countless people a pleasant and safe shelter in nature. Parents and grandparents of gardeners visited the park, as did neighbouring children, classmates and colleagues (of course all in line with the prevailing measures of the authorities). What makes the park special? Even though it is relatively small for Amsterdam standards—just over 100 gardens – the common greenery is extremely diverse. The trees in the park are about sixty years old and provide shelters for owls, all kinds of other birds, bats and insects. Native, local and wild plants grow under the trees around the park. At any time of the year birds hide and nest in the branch walls and hedgerows.

The ditch sides are being mowed in phases with the scythe, so herbal vegetation is a result. The garden borders around the clubhouse are full of Bulgarian onions, various herbs and lots

of host plants and nectar sources. Especially for amphibians and nesting ducks there are floating islands in the ditches, which also purify the water.

Visitors Are Welcome

The public nature garden “De Wijde Blick”(The Wide View) includes shell

Greenhouse for common use





Attractive view



Green maintenance



Lush bank vegetation

paths, a pond, a herb and scent garden, spacious flower beds, various fruit trees, overgrown stone walls and a wild life hedge. “De Wijde Blick” has a lot of food sources for any animal that flies or crawls.

Insect hotels, butterfly and bat boxes, and heaps and hedgehog houses make “De Wijde Blick” complete. The compost bins are carefully managed, the finely chopped pruning waste is used to separate flower beds. Watering is done with rainwater and water from the ditches. The water quality of the ditches by the way is monitored by members of a special committee.

“Garden 94” is a freely accessible public garden of approximately 300 m². Visitors can rest there and enjoy the greenery. There’s also a toilet facility. Signs at the entrances show what can be harvested: grapes, figs, berries, herbs and strawberries. For birds there are sunflowers and teasels, for bees and bumblebees there is a flower meadow. Here too, stone walls, ivy-covered fences, hedgerows and compost bins offer good nesting and hiding places.

Widely Supported

Natural Gardening is widely supported. The coordinator of “De Wijde Blick”, together with a board member, plays a pioneering role, also in the communication with the gardeners. Gardeners receive a monthly newsletter and three times a year a richly illustrated magazine, in which tips and experiences are shared. Gardeners also actively use a social media group app to exchange plants. Many gardeners have their own compost bin – some of them even bring material to be composted from their homes to the garden. The coordinators of the work teams meet several times per season to discuss the progress of the maintenance of the park.

All maintenance teams work according to the guidelines of natural gardening, although people realize that there are different interpretations of that concept. At least one-third of the gardeners work in their own garden according to these guidelines. Information about natural gardening takes place mainly during the so called common work, but also at “De Wijde Blick” and “Garden 94”. The information boards, which are placed here and there, help with this.

New gardeners get a quick start and learn to maintain their garden in a nature-friendly way, how to compost and how to plant. There’s also a big focus on butterflies. In the summer of 2020, the woodland figwort turned out to be full of caterpillars of the figwort butterfly – a night owl that is on the red list of endangered species – a spectacular phenomenon.

The new “Garden 94” is easily found by the (grand) children of the gardeners: they sow seed, take care of plants, pick fruit, taste from the healthy vegetables and in this way they learn from the gardeners and each other to appreciate what Mother Nature produces.

Clubhouse volunteers come to harvest edible flowers and herbs, other gardeners cut herbs for the BBQ. The use of the park has become more intensive and the social cohesion has been strengthened.

Activities

Until Covid-19 made its appearance, there were all kinds of activities like the Daffodil Route, the plant market, early birds’ meetings, Easter festivities, a harvest festival and beekeeping and honey sale. Unfortunately but understandably, the progress of the social activities could not continue in 2020, except for the construction of a heap for grass snakes and the carpentry of nest boxes.



Making a heap for grass snakes



Morning fog

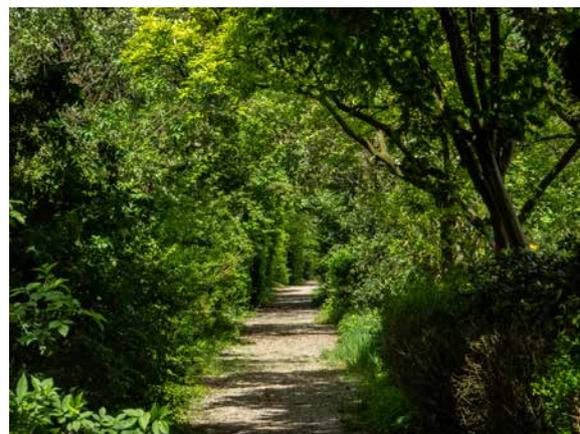


Snowy paths and sides

Also interesting for gardeners and visitors

- The clubhouse has a library with garden books
- Espaliers (Lime trees) in front of the Clubhouse
- A route along all kind of ferns
- Three greenhouses for common use
- A natural playground
- Open Garden Day
- Beekeeping
- Route through and along Daffodil fields
- Route along special trees
- A grass snake heap
- Floating Islands

The garden park Nieuw Vredelust from Amsterdam-Duivendrecht received the International Federation's diploma for ecological gardening.



Fifty shades of green

The Netherlands: The Tuinpark Buikslotermeer in Amsterdam

The Value of allotment garden parks for a town, the example of De Tuinpark Buikslotermeer for Amsterdam.



Gardeners

At Leisure Garden Park Buikslotermeer in Amsterdam, 246 gardeners garden together with family and friends. It's an important place for city-dwellers to relax, work together and be creative. Every gardener has his own way of gardening and therefore the diversity is very large in all respects.

The Common Green

The Garden Park Committee and the Natural Gardening working group collaborate together with the gardeners to maintain the common greenery. Every Saturday morning they work together on the maintenance and nature-friendly management of the garden park. On these mornings they pass on their knowledge to each other. For example: how to build a but-

terfly garden, forest and grass paths, a natural playground, insect hotels, beehives, wild plant boxes and seating areas.

The Natural Garden Working Group

This working group consists of approximately 25 volunteers. They promote the objective of the Dutch Association of Leisure Gardeners (AVVN)





to environmentally and nature-friendly management of garden parks. They do this by guiding, informing and enthusing the gardeners on Saturday mornings, and in their Saturday afternoon program.

Value To The Neighbourhood

Most of the activities at leisure garden park Buikslotermeer reach out to our neighbours because they are open for everyone. People can walk through the park and talk with the gardeners about the joy of leisure gardening.



Buikslotermeer is proud at what they have accomplished together. Their constructive working method and good communication has brought us the highest recognition of the AVVN Quality Mark Natural Gardening. It feels like a valuable appreciation and it shows the value of leisure garden parks for a city like Amsterdam.

De Tuinpark Buikslotermeer received the International Federation's diploma for ecological gardening.



Sweden: Torpakolonin, Gothenburg

Open for the neighbourhood



Garden for the public – They have created a garden with herbs and medicinal plants, which is very well visited by people who sit down to eat their lunch by the little fountain. Now during the pandemic, people visiting their elders living in a home nearby, have come here to meet outdoors.

Torpakolonin is located in Gothenburg and has very creative members who have done several things to make the area more inviting for people who live in the neighbourhood and for the



Bees – There is a Bee group who takes care of the bee hives together.

staff who works at the nearby hospital. They also have number of other fun and inspiring activities.

Not all allotment areas in Sweden are open to the public, and this association set a very good example. By their activities and welcoming attitude they make their allotment area important not only to the allotment holders, but to the people living and working in the surrounding area.

The allotment association Torpakolonin received the Internarional Federation's diploma for innovative projects.

Border for insects – Last year the association celebrated its 90th anniversary. For this reason, the Garden group created a beautiful Jubilee border with lots of insect friendly plants.



Chickens – Another group have chickens together.



For children there is a children's garden and a playground. Next to the playground there is a miniature allotment house with a miniature garden.



Sweden: The allotment garden association „Steffens Mine” in Karlstad

Allotment Gardeners conciously work for Nature and Environment protection



At Steffens Minne they have for the past few years worked actively with a number of interesting, innovative and environtally friendly projects, several of which have had biodiversity in their focus.

An insect friendly meadow

They have created meadows with flowers and grass to attract insects and promote biodiversity.



Using scythes

As the main purpose of the meadows is to promote insects, the grass and the flowers are cut in the autumn the traditional way, using scythes. Cutting with machines would risk killing the insects. Members of the environmental group in the association acquired a number of scythes and learned how to use them. Now they teach other members who are interested in learning how to do this.

The grass harvested from the meadows is used for covering the soil in the vegetable patches, maintaining moisture in the soil and keeping weeds out. The grass also works as a fertilizer and enhances the soil. (There is a specific term in Swedish for this way of growing your vegetables, in English



it might possibly be called "organic mulching". It is a concept within "permaculture".)

Producing their own biochar (charcoal)

A group of people, including some from the environmental group, have been learning how to make their own biochar from wood and branches during 2020. Biochar enhances the soil by absorbing water thus creating reserves that come into use during droughts. It also enhances the soil structure and creates a better environment for the micro organisms which help them in their work with releasing nutrients from the compost in the soil, which in turn is beneficial for the plants. Biochar is also good for the climate as it locks carbon in the soil.

The association have now invested in their own biochar "machine and will continue to make biochar.

Insect hotels and "living quarters" for wild bees

In one of the woods surrounding the meadows the association members have build nests/living quarters for wild bees. In one of the meadows they have a more traditional insect hotel.

"Extra" – Active during 2020

In spite of the pandemic the association continued their work with a number of different activities during 2020. To be able to do this they did their best to make the activities corona safe. The activities were outdoors. All participants kept a corona safe distance to each other.

The biochar group was limited to 8 people, all not present at once. The people who cut the grass in the meadows could continue their work as usual as they always work outdoors and at a safe distance from each other as they use scythes. The association also had yoga a number of times on their big lawn, which was very popular and much appreciated.

All in all, we think Steffens Minne in a very good and inspiring manner kept going with activities and tried to find activities and ways to do things in spite of the pandemic.

The allotment association Steffens Minne received the International Federation's diploma for innovative projects.

Norway: The colonists Berit Hogstad and Bjørn Johansson together with their association Solvang avdeling 5 from Oslo

Allotment Gardeners can act as role models and at the same time make their association an example to be imitated



The colonists Berit Hogstad and Bjørn Johansson have done an impressive work with their bee farm. In only three years they have built a solid competence in beekeeping. In 2020 their honey was a gold medal winner in the Norwegian Championship. The couple is a brilliant ambassador for urban and ecological agriculture and shares their knowledge willingly with fellow colonists and Oslo's residents. Take a look at their Instagram profile.

Here they tell you their story:

"We have been the lucky owners of a plot in an allotment garden site in central Oslo for more than 20 years. The usage of both the cabin and the garden has changed over the years,



especially after the children grew up. In our garden we mainly grow fruit and berries. We are very enthusiastic about ecologic and local food and therefore it was natural for us to start beekeeping.

We are in our third season as beekeepers. During this period, we have had to obtain a lot of interesting, new knowledge. Formally we have been attending different courses and we are certified beekeepers. In our allotment garden site there are several other beekeepers that we meet regularly to share experiences and knowledge.

Urban beekeeping

Urban beekeeping is different from

beekeeping in a more rural environment. In the city there are different aspects that need to be taken into consideration. First the neighbours might be sceptical about living close to a bee farm. We have learnt that information and openness can cure scepticism. In urban beekeeping there are some bee traits that are more important than others. Temperament and the need to swarm are most important. These traits can be controlled through breeding. Our queens are from "elite bees" that are part of the Norwegian Bee Associations (Norbris) breeding program. Thanks to this our bees are very friendly with little need to swarm.

Honey

The bees make honey to eat it themselves. One cube of bees needs 12 kg of honey to survive a regular winter. As a beekeeper you collect all the honey that the bees have produced over a season. As a replacement the bees are given sugar brine in fall.

The bees primarily make honey out of nectar from different flowers. Some flowers produce lots of nectar others less. The bees naturally prefer the most energy efficient nectar available at the moment. In rare occasions the bees also make honey

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out of honey dew, which is the fluid of sugar the aphids secrete while processing leaves. Therefore a beekeeper can harvest honey with a huge variety in taste during a season.

Gold medal winner in the Norwegian Championship 2020

This season we tried really hard to make different types of honey with a great variety in taste. Therefore

we decided to harvest several times through the season. We harvested in the beginning of June, in late July and at the end of August. There was an outstanding difference in taste between these three types of honey. We knew our honey was of great quality this year and entered the Norwegian Championship with two very different products:

- Spring honey: Harvested in the beginning of June. Nectar from early flowering plants such as fruit trees, raspberry, dandelion and others.
- Autumn honey: Harvested in the turn of August. This honey was made out of honey dew. We won the gold medal in this category!

Sharing competence and contribution to the local community

We want to raise awareness about the importance of bees in the global food production. On different occasions we have held lectures and tours, introducing audience to beekeeping. Here we tell them about the life in the cubes and give out tastings of different types of our local honey and our homebrewed "mjød". Mjød is an alcoholic drink, brewed of honey, with ancestry from the Viking Age.

There are many factors that give a good harvest. Pollination is one very important factor for the harvest of fruit and berries. Bees are well known for their pollinating skills and can increase the production of fruit and ber-



ries by 30%. The busy bees can cover a distance of 3 kilometres on their search for nectar. We strongly believe that our neighbours and their crops enjoy our bees' presence in the garden."

Thanks to their activities, these allotment gardeners in the association "Solvang avdeling 5" are an example due to their exchange with others and the sharing of their knowledge as well as the positive influence on the plants on this site. Consequently, the association also becomes an example to imitate.

The colonists Berit Hogstad and Bjørn Johansson together with their association Solvang avdeling 5 in Oslo received the International Federation's diploma for ecological gardening.

The Netherlands: De Tuinpark Tuinwijk (The Gardenpark Tuinwijk) in Amsterdam



De Tuinpark Tuinwijk (The Gardenpark Tuinwijk) from Amsterdam takes all members on board to garden in a nature-friendly way

Natural-Friendly Management

Tuinpark Tuinwijk is located on the north side of Amsterdam and, located along the Ring A10, forms a transition zone between the urban buildings and the green of the landscape around the city. The green, agricultural and ecological landscape, which is characterized by ditches and meadows with the associated flora and fauna, is in a sense continued in the design of the garden park. The park has 229 gardens that are available and affordable for all residents of Amsterdam. The gardeners in the park are a reflection of the inhabitants of the city.

Tuinpark Tuinwijk was founded in 1910 as the first Amsterdam allotment complex. Due to the growth of the city, the gardens had to be moved several times, but since 1974 the gar-

deners in Amsterdam Noord have been given a permanent place. The design of the park was unique for that time; it is the first allotment park that has been laid out entirely in a park form with a lot of public greenery that not only gardeners but everyone can enjoy.

The public green space is managed by a special committee and is based on natural gardening. Because of the diverse nature of all public greenery, there is a lot of room for experiencing and the creation of diverse "green ecological zones". Natural-friendly management, and maintenance and design is always the aim and objective. Tuinwijk wants to create an oasis in the city for flora and fauna. But also a place for nature and environmental education for the gardeners, children and local residents. They are well on their way: they have now reached the highest category of the National Quality Mark of Natural Gardening.

A Few Examples

To give an idea of how they shape natural gardening in the maintenance of public greenery, here below are a few examples.



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Botanical garden

In this place only native plant species grow that thrive on the peat soil of the park. A stacking wall surrounds the whole thing. Lizards and special fern species have already been spotted here.

Bird Island

This island with a natural ruggedness is not accessible. Due to the minimal disturbance, this is a resting place for fauna. A beekeeper has put his hives here. The bee colonies ensure pollination of the fruit trees in the park.

Baskets and bird boxes, natural shelters

At the park there is a lot of attention for biodiversity and the lure of protected animal species. Everywhere in the park you will find bird boxes (also for owls), bat boxes and breeding baskets. Also a toad heap and an insect hotel can be found.

Borders and hedges, paths

In the public greenery along the

paths there are many bee and butterfly plants, partly native. It is a colorful blooming ribbon through the park with a different expression in each season. Under the bushes in the general parts, the herb vegetation is basically left alone. In many places, different cover crops grow together, which contributes to biodiversity. There is an experiment to create more green paths. The first results are positive. They want to continue with this in the coming years.

Water and ditches

Many gardens are adjacent to a ditch. Because of the soft peat soil, the shores are shod here but still with plenty of room for different shore plants. Along the public greenery, many shores have been kept low so that there is a semi wet biotope with marsh plants, aquatic insects and amphibians. This helps to get good water quality.

Trees

In the almost fifty years that this park has existed, the trees have been given the opportunity to reach full maturity. The logging policy is careful and restrained. They reserve some dead trees for the woodpecker.

Playground

The large playing field is not only for the children but is also a place where all kinds of joint activities take place. Through extensive mowing management and natural play facilities, it forms a unity with the adjacent botanical garden.

Food forest

On the edge of the park Tuinwijck wants to plant a food forest with trees and shrubs that provide all kinds of

edibles for everyone. They give small, yet to be grown trees a place in the 'nursery'.

But Tuinwijck does more

In their greenhouse, cultivated and wild plants are grown and sold for little money. In addition, it is a central place where people can go with questions.

They have a well-stocked shop with exclusively organic seeds and a wide range of environmentally friendly products.

Pruned wood is collected at a central location and then shredded and sold in the store. Composting on your own garden is encouraged. Just like the use of ditch and rainwater.

Through the club magazine a lot of information is given and knowledge is shared, for example: the bad effects of pesticides, counts of bees and butterflies, info about permaculture and other informative lectures. In the magazine they also write about the progress of the construction of their "social house" which when finished will provide a house and garden on the park, for people from the city who are struggling physically or mentally, to come back to themselves.

Last but not least. Their park is not only a place for flora and fauna but also for people. Tuinwijck also feels responsible for this. After all, it is a park for all people of Amsterdam who want to escape the hustle and bustle of the city.

De Tuinpark Tuinwijck received the International Federation's diploma for ecological gardening.

The Netherlands: ATV De Uithof in the Hague

Nature friendly Gardening: to continue developing and to be a motivation for all is a *conditio sine qua non*



Quality mark with four Dots

Only a small group of allotment associations in the Netherlands can proudly say that they may carry the 'National Quality Mark for Natural Gardening'. This quality mark comes with the maximum of 4 attainable dots. Since 2021, the amateur allotment association 'ATV De Uithof' in The Hague is proud to be one of these associations!

Free and creative thinking

Since 2010, the entire association is fully committed to the principle of 'Natural gardening'. This has been implemented throughout the entire park. Their main focus is to enthuse circular gardening based on the concept of free and creative thinking. The fact that their association consists of a mix of horticulturists in terms of experience and background is a major advantage in their goal to transfer both knowledge and motivation.

Nature learning path

The method that they have chosen to do this, is a 'Nature-Learning path'. This path winds through the park like an inviting educational artery directly from the main entrance across the entire park. Visitors can find inspiration and gardeners can learn from each other. Directing posts, information boards, workshops and walking tours provide great support for everyone that would have this desire. From the main paths they build a proverbial bridge to the individual gardens.

The path consists of a herb garden, butterfly garden, toad pool and a food & thickets forest. They also pay a lot of attention to the housing of (wild) bees, hedgehogs, ducks and bats.

Pruning and maintenance of the waterfront and a compost heap are completely devoted to 'Natural gardening',

as is their shop. They give space to a good and conscious ecological balance in various ways.

Continuing developing

Already more than fifty percent of the 213 gardens are open to 'Natural gardening'! Of course ATV De Uithof will continue to develop itself and be an incentive for many. They take their role and responsibility as quality mark bearing association extremely serious as they take a lot of pride from it.

ATV De Uithof received the International Federation's diploma for ecological gardening.

Germany: Allotment garden site Moorfeld in Lüneburg

Ready for new ideas:
Urban Gardening in the allotment garden

Joachim Roemer

Former president of the National Allotment Federation of Lower Saxony



Students of Lüneburg University in a permaculture garden



„Garden of the future“ in the allotment site „Moorfeld“ in Lüneburg

Fotos: Joachim Römer

We are Urban Gardening – since 1814. There is no better way to describe the fact that allotment gardens are an integral part of communal green spaces. In addition to the traditional allotment gardens, a variety of green projects have been developed over the last few decades and are regularly summarized under the term of Urban Gardening.

They include the spontaneous greening of spaces around trees, gardening on roofs, in containers, in projects or as a community, for more nature in the city, for climate protection or for a regional food supply. Some projects

are short-term, for example, they want to point out deficits in the urban green. Others establish themselves as long-term projects, such as the “Prinzessinnengärten”(Princess gardens) in Berlin, which have existed since 2009.

Advantages for the allotment gardeners

Many of these projects are managed by a loose community. There is no board of directors to take over the management and no long-term leases to ensure their continued existence. However, the more long-term the urban gardening projects are set up for and the more active people are

involved in them, the more deficits become visible and at the same time the advantages of our community of allotment gardeners. These projects need a structure. They need caretakers who administer, organise, conclude leases and also monitor rules.

And here lies the great opportunity for us. We have to use our advantages of allotment gardening and integrate them firmly into “urban gardening” – and even more than that: we have to put ourselves at the forefront of this movement. We can give these projects a space in which they can develop in the long term. We can give

them a structure, offer them the benefits of non-profit allotment gardening, cheaply lease land and support them in their management.

Many of the urban gardening projects enjoy a high socio-political reputation. They are associated with current issues such as biodiversity, climate protection, urban agriculture, ecological and regional food supply. The embedding of these projects helps to considerably raise the image of allotment gardening, to give a different view of the allotment gardens and show: "We are urban gardening".

Project gardens with a future

Allotments as learning places for children and young people have proved their worth. Intergenerational, intercul-

tural, insect, permaculture and forest gardens are being added as well as a garden of the future, designed in the Moorfeld allotment garden site in Lüneburg by the initiators of the "Museum of the Future".

In this garden, Andreas Hussendörfer shows that nature takes place together with people, how cycles function and that even in the city one cannot renounce to biodiversity. Many wild herbs are also tasty, as points out the garden project manager. He is pleased about the interest taken by the allotment gardeners, who can learn about nature orientated cultivation, about the building up of humus, the preservation of nutrients and about biodiversity in an allotment garden.

Sascha Rhein, president of the association and lawyer knows that this project is not a classical allotment garden. This is so because the law stipulates that an allotment must be used by the tenant himself for non-commercial cultivation. Therefore, the garden of the future is considered as an integral part of the common areas of the allotment site. Public access is secured. The same applies to the fact that there are fixed contacts in charge of the project. It goes without saying for Sascha Rhein that the landlord of the allotment site and also the Hanseatic City of Lüneburg must be involved. "Their approval and support is a prerequisite for the realisation of urban gardening projects on an allotment garden site" says Rhein.

Sweden: Allotment site Dalkarlsleden in Skellefteå

Creating an arboretum, a unique initiative in the North of Sweden



Planting a tree is the best thing you can do in your garden to promote biodiversity.

In Dalkarlsleden allotment association they have three large grass covered areas on their leased land. The areas used to be cut, like lawns, several times a year, and in a few years back one member suggested that they ought to create a more living environment for insects and bird on one of the lawns (5000 m²).

In the end, they decided they wanted to create an arboretum on this lawn. A garden designer made a plan and suggested suitable trees and shrubs. This is in the north of Sweden, so the trees and shrubs need to survive the winters there.

To finance the project they also applied and were granted a loan for 10 000 euro in 2020 from the Allotment Federation's "Loan Fund", from where member associations can ap-



The other two lawns have been transformed to meadows, which also benefit biodiversity.

ply for loans to finance investments for the common good for the association, such as storage sheds, meeting house, sanitary facilities, fences etc.

In 2021 the arboretum was planted by the members, with a total of 34 trees and 16 shrubs of 30 different varieties. It was all inaugurated on August 28th, the Allotment Garden Day (as proclaimed by the Swedish Allotment Federation). Ulrica Otterling, Secretary General, was there and helped plant the final tree. This also became a wonderful finale of the Swedish Federation's 100th Anniversary and the Federation's tree planting campaign connected to the jubilee.

The allotment site Dalkarlsleden received the International Federation's diploma for innovative projects.

Bee hotel in the arboretum.



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