



# Hyphen 47

Office International du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux  
association sans but lucratif | Spring 2011



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# Introduction

**Preben Jacobsen,**

President of the International Allotment Garden Federation  
& Chairman of the Danish Allotment Garden Federation  
(Kolonihaveforbundet for Danmark)



**PREBEN JACOBSEN**

The 2011 International Allotment Garden Federation Conference in Copenhagen will see the Danish Allotment Garden Federation surrender its position of Chair to the Dutch Federation, having held this position since 2008.

It has been very exciting for me as the new Chairman of the Danish Union to take over as President of the International Federation. We benefit from particularly good teamwork on both the Executive Board and at general assemblies. But we can still improve at ensuring that all member organisations are actively involved in this teamwork.

From my position on the Executive Board it is also my experience that our allotments may be under threat in all of our member countries; the nature of this threat varies, but will inevitably lead to the closure of allotments if we are not careful.

Personally, I have previously been doubtful of the necessity for an international collaboration with regards to allotments, because I felt that we were all too different. Today I am in no doubt whatsoever of the importance of international collaboration. We live in a global world, collaboration in the EU continues to develop, and the European Parliament has even greater influence on the decisions that control our lives, while national governments have relinquished much of their power. Everything therefore points to the need for a strengthening of international collaboration.

We have around 3 million members in the International Federation. We know that this corresponds to approximately 10 million allotment users. It is this knowledge that we must use to influence the decision-makers both on national and European level. The influence on European level has become easier since the European Parliament has gained greater authority.

If we are to have greater influence, then our members must also become more actively involved in our organisation. From our national federations we must view international collaboration as an important part of the individual federation's activity. We must encourage our members to take ownership of the International Federation.

It requires significant effort to change the attitude of a large and old organisation such as ours, but this discussion has already begun on our Executive Board and at our general assembly in March.

Equally important is for us to spread awareness of allotments in other member countries in our own national federations. This can be achieved via websites, magazines and study trips etc. It is up to each individual federation to choose which method is preferable, but it must be based on teamwork.

If we do not ensure that our member organisations gain greater influence and thereby greater interest and involvement in international work, the International Allotment Garden Federation will face some very challenging conditions in the future.

We must create a feeling of community among our members – and the knowledge that we as a member are not alone.

# Activity report 2010

The executive board has the pleasure to submit to you the activity report for 2010.

## 1) Internal activities.

Since the last statutory meeting the executive board has met on March 13th and June 11th 2010. The November meeting was delayed for time management reasons and was held on January 15th and 16th, 2011.

The executive board has continued to discuss how the Office can be more visible, both to third parties, and to the allotment gardeners.

As far as this representation of the Office is concerned the executive board, after intensive discussions, has made different proposals to the general assembly:

- All the necessary steps have been taken in order to get a new flag in replacement of the flag, lost after the international congress in Lyon. Very warm thanks go to the Austrian federation for having, not only discussed the matter with the firm creating the new flag, but for having as well, with great generosity, offered this second flag to the Office. (The first flag was offered to the Office by the Austrian federation at the occasion of the 10th international congress in Vienna in 1955). The new flag shows the historical picture on one side and the today's logo of the Office on the other side. The aim thereof is to show that the movement is both up-to-date and

respects the values on which it is based.

- The executive board has supervised the work on the new information brochure and has sent the necessary reminders.
- The executive board has made the necessary proposals to the general assembly to start the survey of innovative projects. Up to now we received three written projects from Germany, Switzerland, Austria, France and the Netherlands, two written projects from Great-Britain and four written projects from Finland. Two additional German projects and one Danish project were presented during the study session in Birmingham.
- The executive board has made an evaluation of the celebrations of the European Day of the Garden organised in Bremen. The aim of these celebrations is the sensitisation of the public and the authorities. The executive board is of the opinion that the celebrations have to be continued in the future. They can be organised following to or during an international congress and/or during a seminar/ study session organized before or after a national event.
- The executive board has discussed in great depth the problems concerning the efficiency of our movement and how to strengthen the cooperation within the International Office. It has acknowledged following facts:

**Allotment gardens are important because:**

- gardeners still have a close contact with nature – this is more important in a society where people live more and more in an industrialised environment;
- gardeners know and show that food grows from the earth - this is more important in a society where more and more children think food comes from factories;
- allotment gardeners in most cases form a close community where people cooperate in close contact with each other - this is more important in a society where people have looser and looser/ lesser and lesser contact-with others;
- gardeners facilitate biodiversity in different ways; they keep many varieties of food crops alive and may on their allotment promote harmony with natural species - this is more and more important in a society that tends to industrialise nature and threatens the natural environment.

In all: allotment gardens provide health, happiness and important education, and facilitate biodiversity and a sound environment. (A recent study in the Netherlands even indicated better health with allotment gardeners than in the population in general). Thoughts about how to improve the position of allotments have been discussed and

will be presented in thoughts and proposals for the general assembly.

- Thanks to the generous support of the Austrian federation two very nice issues of the "Hyphen" could again be published.

## 2) European Day of the Garden.

The European Day of the Garden was created in 1989 and was celebrated during the seminars of the International Office in Vienna in 1991, in Sandnes in 1993, in Luxemburg in 1995, in Warsaw in 1999, in Munich in 2001 and in Bratislava in 2003.

The European Day of the Garden was again celebrated this year at the initiative of the German federation. The celebration took place together with the hundredth anniversary of the federation of Bremen (Germany). This celebration consisted first in an official meeting with speeches and a round-table. The president of the International Office Preben JACOBSEN said among others: "It is not sufficient to celebrate every two years a Day of the Garden. Our aim is that every day becomes a Day of the Garden".

At this occasion the diploma for an ecological gardening was awarded to the allotment garden sites of: "Ons Buiten" in Amsterdam (NL), "Eigen Arbeid" in Den Haag (NL), "Am Anger" in Vienna (A), "KGV Wardamm-Woltmershausen" in Bremen (D).

This official part was then followed by an activity day in the FlorAtrium with information stands about activities for young and old.

Warm thanks go to the German federation for its initiative and to the federation of Bremen for the excellent organisation.

## 3) Study session

This year the study session took place

in Birmingham from August 26th till August 28th. The subject was: "the future of allotment gardens". Two main topics were discussed: "The physical lay-out of the allotment garden sites" and the problems "who will be the future allotment gardener"?

At the occasion of this study session the workshops had again been organised according to the new scheme elaborated by the executive board in March 2009. The workshops functioned in an excellent way and the discussions were very dense. The keywords for the future worked out during this study session were: Flexibility, opening of the sites, open-mind, innovation, sharing with the population and external groups.

The diploma for social activities of allotment gardeners created in 2010 was awarded for the first time at the occasion of the study session to Cold Barn Farm allotments (Great-Britain) for their activities with young people.

Our English friends have to be very heartily thanked once more for this successful study session.

## 4) International organisations

### Council of Europe

The Office has taken part in the meetings organised for the INGOs.

The INGOs of the Commission for a sustainable development have mainly dealt with the question on biodiversity. The day of biodiversity, organized on April 28th 2010, was a great success.

One has to underline once more that the resolution 249 (2008) based on a written report by Mr. Willy BORSUS, as well as the oral report presented in January 2010, have enumerated the allotment gardens as a priority element to safeguard biodiversity in urban areas.

Unfortunately, much work and many efforts of the INGOs with participative status at the Council of Europe have now to be concentrated to fight the budgetary shorting affecting in an unfair and disproportioned way the INGOs, limiting in this way their activities.

The Council of Europe, pioneer in matters of democracy and model for the participation of the civil society is unfortunately walking backwards.

## European Union

No new developments have to be mentioned.

## 5) Contacts with the federations that are not member in the Office.

The allotment gardeners from Czechia have contacted the German federation for a meeting. This meeting was held between the German central federation (BDG), the national federation of the allotment gardeners of Saxony and the Czech allotment gardeners on October 19th, 2010.

The contacts with the Japanese allotment gardeners have been continued. A regular exchange of information has taken place. The Japanese allotment gardeners will as well be presented in the new Office information brochure.

## 6) Information given to interested people.

This year the Office has continued to give information on the allotment gardens to students writing dissertations or working on their PhD as well as to research institutes.

## Luxemburg, January 2011 The executive board

# Decision protocol of the general assembly held in Luxembourg on 18th and 19th March, 2011

Were represented: the federations of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great-Britain, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland.

Was excused: the federation of Poland

Were absent: the federations of Norway and Slovakia

- 1) The agenda is completed and adopted with unanimity.
- 2) The decision protocol and the report of the general assembly held in Birmingham are adopted with unanimity.
- 3) The activity report is adopted with unanimity.
- 4) After a survey of the received/ missing documents it is decided to charge the editor with the preparatory work for the new information brochure of the Office.  
  
W. WOHATSCHEK gets the mission to contact, if possible, the Slovakian federation.
- 5) C. ZIJDEVELD will start the elaboration of the documents for the brochure concerning the innovative projects on basis of the

received projects.

- 6) After discussions concerning a new initiation of the celebrations of the European Day of the Garden the following compromise is adopted:
  - The national federations, that do not yet celebrate a Day of the Garden, should try to initiate such a celebration in their country.
  - Once all the federations celebrate such an event, we should initiate a common celebration.
  - Up to that moment, international delegates should take part in the ceremony organized by a country doing this already on a regular basis. This event should be reported in the media as the "European Day of the Garden".
  - Therefore the next celebration of the Day of the Garden should take place in Switzerland at the occasion of the study session in 2012.
- 7) The programme for the international congress in Copenhagen is adopted with unanimity.
- 8) The Danish federation will assume the introductory lecture for the congress subject, the Dutch

and English federations will assume the lectures introducing the respective workshop.

- 9) S. WOHATSCHEK will preside the workshop on "the allotment gardeners of tomorrow"; T. TERLEKI will preside the workshop on "allotment gardens of tomorrow". The secretaries for the workshops still have to be designated.
- 10) It is acknowledged that it is not necessary to have a simultaneous translation into French during the congress.  
  
There will be a simultaneous translation into English and German in the plenary sessions and in the workshops.
- 11) Because no simultaneous translation into French is necessary, the congress budget is equilibrated. The question of the necessity for the Office to finance the technical equipment of the simultaneous interpretation is no more relevant.
- 12) The presented draft resolution for the congress is adopted with unanimity.

- 13) It is decided that the federations will send their ideas on the practical application of the resolution (a few lines) to the general secretariat before 15th June. These ideas will be published as appendix to the resolution and transmitted with it.
- 14) The contents of the Hyphens 48 and 49 are completed.
- 15) The national federations get a DVD with the entire collection of the Hyphens issued in German, French and English.
- 16) The federations are once more requested to send national news to the Office so that they can be published on our Internet site. The aim is to show the activities of the federations.
- 17) W. SCHAFFNER informs on the planned manner to prepare the congress subject 2014. This subject will be discussed during the study session in Switzerland in 2012 and during the seminar in Germany in 2013.
- He presents a draft programme for this study session in Switzerland. The final programme and the details should be ready for Copenhagen.
- 18) C. ZIJDEVELD is confirmed as president of the International Office.
- 19) A. REES is elected as auditor to finish the mandate of Geoff STOKES.
- 20) P. JACOBSEN is elected as auditor to finish the mandate of C. ZIJDEVELD.
- 21) R. AAOLTONEN is elected as substitute accountant till 2014.
- 22) The treasurer J. KIEFFER presents the financial report and gives the necessary explanation.
- 23) The auditors inform that they have found no mistake. They ask the delegates to adopt the financial report and to grant discharge to the executive board.
- 24) The general assembly adopts the financial report of 2010 with unanimity and also grants discharge to the executive board with unanimity.
- 25) The draft budget for 2011 is adopted with unanimity after having been discussed.
- 26) The draft budget for the solidarity fund 2011 is adopted with unanimity.
- 27) The request to grant the Golden Rose to the city of Gradignan (France) is adopted with unanimity.
- 28) The request to grant the diploma on an ecological gardening to the association KGV Freiheit in Berlin (Germany) to the association Zonnehoek in Amsterdam (Netherlands) and to the association Falan in Falun (Sweden) is adopted with unanimity.
- 29) The request to grant the diploma for social activities to the association KGV Heideland in Braunschweig (Germany) is adopted with unanimity.
- 30) The written report concerning the cooperation with the international organisations needs no more explanations.
- 31) The federations give their opinion on the ideas presented by the executive board concerning an increased efficiency of the International Office. These discussions will be included in the further work of the executive board. The results of the meeting of the executive board on 1st July will be sent to the federations before the congress in Copenhagen.
- 32) The national federations present their activities and problems and answer the questions of the delegates.
- 33) The next general assembly will be held in Copenhagen on 18th August, 2011. The next statutory general assembly will be held in Luxemburg on 9th and 10th March, 2012 in the City Hotel.

**Schoolgarden – vegetables**

# The allotment gardeners from Denmark present themselves

## Structure

Central level, 34 districts, 410 associations, 40,000 members.

## Allotment gardens

40,000 gardens, Average size 350 sq meters.

## Administration

Volunteers. In some bigger garden associations board members are paid a yearly lump sum of up to a few thousand Euros.

## Ownership

Approx. 6% of allotment gardens are situated on land belonging to municipalities, 15% on land belonging to the State, 10% belonging to associations and 8% are private.

The Danish Federation of Allotment Gardens, Kolonihaveforbundet for Danmark, is based in Copenhagen. Only the office in Copenhagen is staffed with employees. The main tasks of the central office are training of board members from local associations, administration of lease contracts, legal advice to associations and individual members, negotiations with relevant public authorities, advisory gardening service through a “green hotline” and through highly qualified local garden consultants, publication of a members’ garden magazine 5 times a year and awarding prizes for best gardening etc. The Federation receives no public subsidies.

A high percentage of the land laid out

for allotment gardens in Denmark is protected by legislation. The legislation only permits use of the land for other (public) purposes under particular circumstances and only if other suitable land is offered as compensation. National legislation contains few other requirements mainly regarding construction of allotment garden houses. Accordingly allotment gardens are mainly regulated by local, municipal planning provisions and the individual lease contracts.

Most of the allotment garden land belonging to municipalities and all such land belonging to the State is rented by the Federation on long term leases and then re-leased to the individual associations on the same conditions.



The conditions and level of rent per sq meter may vary considerably from one authority to the other. So do the conditions relating e.g. to the size and height of houses and building materials used, hedging, use of pesticides etc. Sizes of houses vary from 10 up to 70 sq meters. The rent varies between 0.1 and 2.5 Euro per sq meter. Prices for allotment houses are regulated and maximized by rules binding all members of the Federation and maintained by the Federation at national level. Garden houses are the property of the tenant and may be traded according

to the rules fixed by the associations' rules. Some associations allow the tenant to find a buyer or a new tenant, others have waiting lists that have to be observed by those selling.

The number of gardens in the associations varies from a few to nearly one thousand gardens. In 80 – 85% of the 40,000 gardens the occupiers are allowed to stay overnight during the summer period April till September. About 80% of garden houses are equipped with electricity and 95% with drinking water. The size of the gar-

dens varies between 150 and 400 sq meters – the average being around 350 sq meters.

Only a smaller percentage of the allotment garden associations have full scale systems for disposal of waste water and most gardens rely on individual solutions such as chemical or bio WC or collective toilet solutions. It is foreseen that within a limited period of time most associations with permission to stay overnight will be obliged to establish full scale waste water disposal systems.



**Summerhouse**



*Privately owned garden around the home*

## The allotment gardeners from Luxembourg present themselves

### Structure

1 federation with 128 local sections unifying 25,397 member families

### Allotment gardens

4,826 allotment gardens with an average size of 250 sq meters generally on leased land

### Administration

Mainly voluntary and 2 paid employees

### Ownership

90% communal land owners,  
10% associations

The “Ligue Luxembourgeoise du Coin de Terre et du Foyer” is based in L – 1260 Luxembourg, 97, rue de Bonnevoie.

The first allotment garden associations were created in Luxembourg in 1886. But the Ligue Luxembourgeoise du Coin de Terre et du Foyer was only founded on December 30th, 1928 following the unification of these associations.

By January 2010, the federation unites 25,397 member families spread over 128 local sections. The Luxem-

bourg federation unifies both gardeners having an allotment garden plot in one of the 25 allotment garden sites and owners of private gardens. Approximately 80% of the allotment gardeners in Luxembourg have their own private garden. The allotment gardeners and cultivate approximately 1,500 hectares of gardens.

The federation itself does not administer grounds taken on lease or put at its disposal. The local sections however administer approximately 40 hectares and put allotment garden plots with a size between 200 and 400 sq meters

at the disposal of their members.

The allotment garden sites normally have a community building hosting the secretariat of the section and common toilets. Some sites have a common tool shed and a common water point.

The individual plots are often equipped with a tool shed or a shed without a connection to electricity. Sometimes however one can find sheds with a connection to drinking water and with individual toilets.

The aims of the federation are the following:

- Encouragement of gardening and of amateur beekeeping;
- Support of the sections to buy grounds for the creation of allotment gardens;
- Encouragement to buy garden land and stimulation of the individual families;
- Enrichment of the family life and embellishment of the home;

- Creation and protection of green spaces as well as ornamental gardens in towns in order to improve the quality of life;
- Embellishment of the villages and protection of their lifestyle;
- Stimulation of the cultural life in the associations;
- Conservation of a healthy environment as well as stimulation for a better knowledge of nature and its interactions.

The annual affiliation fee to be paid by the members to their associations varies between 6 and 12 €. The associations continue 4 € to the federation to cover the administration costs and the subscription to the review "Gaart an Heem" (Garden and Home) published 9 times per year.

The yearly rent varies between 2 and 12 € per 100 sq meters.

In Luxemburg the allotment gardens are not protected by a specific allot-

ment garden law. Some provisions of the law dated July 19th 2004 concern allotment gardens. There are some restrictions concerning the cancellation of leases.

The Luxembourg federation and its member associations were founded under the law of March 27th, 1900 relating to agricultural co-operative societies. Therefore they benefit from the advantages of this law regarding their leases.

The Government supports the federation financially by granting annual subsidies.

The federation offers formation courses to its members (i.e. courses on arboriculture and lectures on different subjects) and cooperates with other federations (i.e. nature protection associations, Natura, Union of poultry societies, federation of beekeepers' unions)



**Allotment garden site in Luxembourg-Hollerich**

# Netherlands: An introduction to the activities and information Centre for Garden and Nature of the AVVN

Chris Zijdeveld,

President of the Dutch federation of allotment gardeners (AVVN)

## Introduction

In April 2008 the AVVN moved to its new office building. It is a special activity and education centre in the middle of the greatest new housing area of the Netherlands, Leidsche Rijn in Utrecht.

In this area for 90,000 people new homes are being built. Because of the location of the centre the AVVN can in addition to its national tasks, also play an important role in the new building area and advise the new residents in the lay out of their gardens.

The building was opened in May 2008 by Minister Cramer of Spatial Planning and Environment. The AVVN gives information and advice to garden lovers who want to broaden their hobby. The

building consists of an office and a (semi) public area, containing the activities room, the permanent exhibition on gardening, the study room and the information and sales corner.

The AVVN gives lectures, presentations, courses, guided tours and workshops on various aspects of gardening and activities for our member associations.

The outdoor space is managed by NMC-Utrecht (nature and environment communication), the cooperation partner of the AVVN. This garden, called "Het Zand" includes, among other things school gardens, a monumental greenhouse, and the neighbourhood meeting garden. The garden is laid out and maintained in accordance with the



**School-garden**

principles of natural gardening and offers an inspiration for the private garden owner.

## The centre

The building has a public and an office area. The building is officially recognised as a "green project" by the Ministry of Spatial Planning and Environment, among other things because of the use of passive solar energy, the application of certified western red cedar wood, a vegetation balcony, connection to city heating system and energy-efficient lighting.

## Sustainable

The centre makes optimum use of passive solar energy, the sun enters the building where needed and is kept out where necessary. Features are: the slightly set back windows, the overhang of the roof as natural sun protection, larger windows on the south side of the building, smaller windows or no windows at all on the north



**Office**

side, office space on the south side with sufficient day light, kitchen, toilets and storage on the north side.

The Centre is also connected to city heating.

The centre is, except for the metal-bearing frame, built and finished with certified red cedar wood, which was not treated in any way and thus does not put any additional pressure on the environment.

One of the balconies has a rooftop vegetation of sedum plants.



**Anne BOUMA room**



**Information corner**



**Meeting in the Gerhard MOSTERT room**



**Part of the exhibition in the centre**



**Domicile and information center of the AVNN**

### Multifunctional use

During office hours the centre is open to the public. Those who are interested are welcome to look around in our information corner or visit the exhibition hall and the library. Also people who are interested in the architecture and the sustainability can have a look around.

Efficient in space usage, the centre is divided into an office area and a semi-public area, where there is room for a permanent exhibition and an exchange exhibition. This multifunctional room is also used for activities such as larger public meetings (up to 70 persons), courses and workshops.

Downstairs there are two larger offices, the large multifunctional room, the kitchen, the toilets including a toilet for the disabled and the storage room. Upstairs there is a smaller meeting room (up to 15 persons), an office and the archive.

From the outside our built-in bicycle

shed and the special toilet for the children of the school gardens can be reached.

The large semi-public room downstairs is called the Gerard Mostert room, after the founding father of our National Quality Mark for Ecological Gardening.

The meeting room upstairs is called the Anne Bouma room after our former secretary and president of the international congress in 1992.

### Finally

The new centre provides the staff of the AVNN a very pleasant working space.

Because of the partnership with the city of Utrecht the AVNN has now a demonstration garden at its disposal.

Without exception the participants in our activities and meetings experience the centre as a very enjoyable and inspiring location.



*Allotment gardens in Chalon*

# France: The future of allotment gardens

Hervé BONNAVAUD,  
President of the French allotment garden federation

## I - AN EVOLVING ENVIRONMENT (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 abbey Jules



**Raised beds for disabled persons**

Lemire in France or Dr Moritz Schreiber 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 are still to be found 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 the 19th century and until the 1950s there was enough available land to create allotment gardens inside or around towns and the number of plots was at its highest then.

*At that time about 80 % of the population lived in the country.*

After the Second World War the situation changed very quickly. Towns developed to face the baby boom. New

towns, mushroom towns were built. Their development implied the disappearance of 90 % of allotment gardens in the three decades that followed the war. Allotment gardens were pushed out of towns, often on bad lands of little agricultural value, in polluted areas (disused landfills).

## II - THE SEVENTIES

The interest for the environment was born in the seventies when the local authorities started to perceive the benefits that could be drawn from allotment gardens.

They became aware of the need to preserve them. The number of allotment sites tended to stabilize then.

Meanwhile the local authorities that owned most of the land on which allotment gardens were established and the National Federation of Allotment Gardens (FNJFC) started to change their views on the conception of allotment gardens. They developed an interest for the environmental quality

of the sites, for their integration in the local environment, for the quality of life of plot holders. Playgrounds and facilities for friendly meetings were provided.

People had smaller families, even among the working classes and as a consequence the size of the plots was reduced to 250 m<sup>2</sup>. Very few families had more than 3 children.

At the same time with the development of residential, industrial and commercial areas around towns, land became scarcer and very expensive.

## 3 - THE LAST DECADE

*Nowadays it is estimated that 80 % of the population lives in urban areas.*

In the past 10 years the movement of community gardens — that was born in the USA in the seventies with Liz Christy — invaded France.

Community gardens quickly developed in large cities (Paris, Lille, Lyon, Marseille, Nantes,...) and got support



**Allotment gardens in Craon**

from the local authorities that still view them as a means to solve social problems.

There is a great demand for these often ephemeral gardens. The land on which they settle sometimes do 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 abbey Lemire and whose main function was to feed the poor working class people. Community gardens are based on a political project.

The FNJFC has learnt from the experiment of community gardens and thanks to its Study department (one town planner, one landscape designer and an occasional architect) has de-

signed 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 can't 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 improve 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.

#### IV - FRENCH ALLOTMENT GARDENS IN THE 19TH CENTURY

According to the environment and the local possibilities, the area of the plots varies from 20 m<sup>2</sup> in the denser urban areas such as the centre of Paris (these look more like community gardens) to a maximum of 150 m<sup>2</sup> in provincial towns and outside large cities. The plots at the foot of the blocks of flats rarely exceed 50 m<sup>2</sup>.

The general tendency, to take into account the high demand of people with financial difficulties and the limited availability of land in urban areas is to build 80 to 100 m<sup>2</sup> plots.





**Allotment gardens in Versailles**

These are vegetable gardens and not leisure gardens, even if there is a growing demand for such gardens. The demand for leisure gardens generally comes from middle class people, whereas the working class want vegetable gardens.

Allotment gardens are back in the centre of towns.

These new allotment gardens are environmentally friendly.

In 2008, the FNJFC wrote a "Gardening and Environment Charter" that is a kind of good practice guide promoting the following:

- zero pesticide, prohibition of herbicides;
- collection of rain water ;
- composting ;
- use of green fertilizers ;
- encouragement to plant flowers to feed the bees ;
- prohibition of mono culture to maintain and develop biodiversity.

Allotment garden societies / associations are asked to install beehives inside the sites in partnership with local honey-makers.

On all new sites fruit trees are planted. (In the past, trees were often forbidden).

The FNJFC will soon sign a partnership with the Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux (the main association for the protection of birds in France. The LPO is a member of Bird Life, an international NGO).

According to this partnership birds' nests and feeders will be installed inside the garden sites and plot holders will be asked to grow a large variety of flowers to feed the bees during the spring, summer and autumn seasons.

The allotment gardens are open to children and especially the school children. School plots are often provided.

The new allotment gardens are open

to the population at large on special occasions such as open day celebrations or permanently to the inhabitants of the surrounding flats or houses. Some of the new sites are inserted inside public parks and become places of intercourse between the plot holders and the visitors. They can exchange advice, seeds, vegetables...

Disabled people are welcome and raised beds are provided for them.

Some local associations have agreements with homes for old people.

We have a few examples of conventions between allotment garden associations and the justice. Youngsters who have committed minor crimes have to work for the association in their free time instead of going to prison or paying fines which they cannot afford. Very positive experiments have been carried out in Besançon and Hérouville Saint Clair.

## V - FEES / RENTS - SAVINGS

In France the individual plot holders do not pay a rent but a fee to the association. Associations sometimes have to pay a rent to the owner of the land, whether it be a private owner or even a local authority.

This distinction is essential in fiscal terms and as regards the rights of the person who either rents a plot or simply pays a fee to an association to become a member.

The fee for a 150 to 200 m<sup>2</sup> plot varies from 15 to 250 € (euros) a year.

The plot holders that complain more about the amount of these fees are usually those who pay the lowest fees. This is the case in Calais where the fee for a 600 m<sup>2</sup> plot is only 15 € per year!

The highest fees are to be found in the Paris area where we nevertheless have the longest waiting lists.

A 100 € per year fee seems reasonable though. This is equal to the price of a cigarette per day (0.27 €).

No other sport or leisure activity is as cheap and allows the person to produce his own fruit, vegetables, herbs and flowers to feed his family.

It is estimated that with a 200 m<sup>2</sup> plot it is possible to save about 1000 € a year.

We often observe that where the holders pay the lowest fees, the plots are badly kept and that it is difficult or sometimes impossible to enforce the rules of the association and the «Gardening and Environment Charter». As a consequence the existence of these sites is threatened in the short term.

## VI - LEISURE GARDENS

As mentioned in paragraph IV, there is a growing demand for a new form of allotment gardens on the model of

those we find in Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Finland...

In France, the law does not allow plot holders to stay overnight in their gardens. Thus the sheds are small (2 to 6 m<sup>2</sup> on the average). There is no electricity supply, no sewage.

Thus, allotment gardens do not pay any local taxes or pollution taxes even when there is a water supply by the town.

Moreover our statutes do not allow us to build leisure gardens.

## CONCLUSION

Founded in 1896 by abbey Jules LEMIRE, the French movement of allotment gardens did not evolve for almost a century. As a result roughly 90 % of the sites disappeared and the remaining ones had a very bad image. They sometimes looked like Gipsy camps and were strongly criticized by the neighbouring population and the local authorities. Such derelict sites are no longer accepted in or around urban areas.

It was the same as regards environment: plot holders used 5 to 10 times more pesticides than farmers. It is well established that allotment gardeners and home gardeners are great polluters.

In order to survive and develop, allotment gardens have to adapt to the new deal, to follow the evolution of our societies, to answer the needs of the population. Their needs change with time, with the economical and social problems, with the organisation of towns...

In the 19th century, allotment gardens must be :

- respectful of the environment ;
- open to the population ;

- integrated inside the urban landscape ;
- designed with care ;
- of a limited size. Smaller plots and smaller sites with a maximum of 50 plots to make them more friendly and easier to manage. The old sites with 200 plots or more must be split and regenerated ;
- close to the dwelling areas to reduce transport.

The building contractors, the local authorities that have an interest in eco-districts generally look forward to the creation of allotment gardens in the centre of the new residential areas with a particular care for sustainable development.

During the past 10 years we have witnessed and accompanied a real revolution in the design of allotment gardens.

## THE FUTURE OF ALLOTMENT GARDENS IN EUROPE

Because of the history, culture, local traditions, economic development, allotment gardens have different aspects in the European countries.

What is common to the French allotment gardens that are mainly devoted to the production of vegetables whose only function is to feed the gardener's family and to the allotment gardens in other countries that look more like leisure gardens or are mere country houses?

Yet, whatever the local differences, our allotment gardens must be preserved and developed and they will have a future if :

- they are able to adapt to the evolution of our societies to satisfy the needs of the humblest families ;
- they open themselves to the town and to their neighbourhood ;
- they are environmentally friendly.



# Germany: Good neighbours!

Successful collaboration between an allotment garden association and a local elderly person's home

Marianne Genenger-Hein

The city of Mönchengladbach is the largest settlement in the Lower Rhine Valley, with a population of 262,500 and an area of 17,100 hectares. It is deservedly considered a green city, with forests and public green spaces covering 2,100 hectares of its area. 130 hectares are incorporated into the city's green areas as allotment garden sites. The 50 allotment garden

associations with 2,742 allotments, all protected by town planning, form an important part of social life and urban culture.

The Windberg group of allotment gardens in the Windberg district is the oldest in Mönchengladbach, formed in 1915. Since then, it has constantly re-invented itself and is now an open site

that has become an essential feature of the district and of the green belt that runs through the city.

For decades the allotment garden association was right next to the British army's base in the Rhine (JHQ), which was stationed in Mönchengladbach. A variety of buildings such as the officers' casino were adjacent to the site.



**The site after its renovation- raised beds**

The allotment gardens were already protected by town planning in 1971. The fall of the Berlin wall in November 1989 and the end of the Cold War brought repercussions for JHQ. Units were withdrawn and the officers' casino was abandoned. In 2001, it was decided to build an elderly persons' home in Windberg on the site of the old officers' casino.

So, the allotment garden association found itself with a new neighbour but it also took advantage of the situation to integrate itself into the neighbourhood even further. The first step was to create a new path through the allotment gardens, to the great delight both of the home's residents and the people living in Windberg, who quickly started to use the path as it reduced the distance to the city centre from 1,500 to 256 metres. The residents of the home were actively involved in the gardens, together with the home's founder and the department respon-

sible for the city's green spaces. The goal of this project was not simply to be neighbours nor to manage separate projects, but to live and plan together. The 2.5 metre fence on the North side of the home from the times of the military base was dismantled and replaced by a small one metre trellis. It had a gate for pedestrians, allowing residents of the home to access the allotment gardens directly from the home's grounds.

Children from the local primary school were also involved in the construction. They created multi-coloured paintings for the wooden balustrade around the site, which were later put up in the school's playground. Most of the existing trees and plants were able to be kept. Adapting the paths for wheelchairs and walking frames not only pleased the elderly but also local families who took their children in prams through the allotment garden sites where the biotopes, wildflowers

and educational garden – offered interesting things to see each season.

An "ornamental garden" was then created for the residents of the home, right next to the association's building. In addition to its grounds, the home also rented an allotment to turn into an ornamental and vegetable garden suitable for handicapped people. Small fruit trees and raised flowerbeds and vegetable patches, easily-accessible via the wide, paved paths around them, permit the elderly residents to enjoy and grow their own garden unhindered, with the help of the allotment gardeners. The garden produce is washed, prepared and cooked by the home's chef.

People suffering from dementia need a world they can still understand. The close vicinity of their home is comforting when they leave the grounds and immediately find themselves in the allotment gardens. Mrs S. a pensioner



***A group of elderly people and their carers are enjoying their stay in the allotment garden***

in the home, spends a lot of time in the garden (weather permitting) with one of her friends from the home: "The garden is wonderful and we must take advantage of it every day". The collaboration between elderly people and allotment gardeners is reinforced by mutual invitations to the association's and the home's own events. Plans for the allotments and their maintenance are discussed over a cup of coffee, making neighbours true friends and members of the association.

In the future it is planned to develop this rewarding collaboration even further, involving the association's volunteers and the home's staff, and also local primary schools. Managing the garden is a continuous process, adapting to the users' needs. The ever open ornamental garden is planned to be developed into a meeting point to preserve and nurture connections between the gardeners, the home's residents and the district's inhabitants.

In conclusion, the long-term collaboration between the allotment gardeners, the home's managers and the City gardening department has borne fruit and created ties across the neighbourhood. The communal garden area is not only appreciated by the gardeners and residents of the home, but also offers walks, relaxation and interaction for the entire neighbourhood of Windberg.



***Appel harvest***

# Germany: The “Schreberjugend Sachsen”<sup>(1)</sup> nature project: “Natur Sachsen”<sup>(2)</sup>

Tommy Brumm,  
President of the “Landesverbandes Sachsen der Schreberjugend”



In a time of global warming, the survival of many species of plants and animals is in danger. Suitable habitats are becoming more and more scarce. Allotment gardens can be one of these man-made habitats. These gardens are readily inhabited by many species such as snakes, in addition to other types of plants and animals. An allotment garden site offers them a varied

environment in a small space. Thanks to environmentally-friendly behaviour in and around these sites, we can turn them into an ark for endangered species and prepare the land to preserve the diversity of species in our region.

Our nature project “Natur Sachsen” is part of this plan. The idea for this project comes from 2005 with the ini-

tiation of our “Zum Holzbrunnen”<sup>(3)</sup> project for children and teenagers. After a great start, we had to answer the question “How do we keep children interested in nature?”. Youngsters from the children’s gardens returned with great enthusiasm to our gardens to learn how to look after plants; but they have also learnt to recognise the creatures which inhabit these spaces, such as earthworms, for example. The knowledge acquired from nature is etched into the children’s memories and sparks curiosity to learn more. Through our nature project “Natur Sachsen”, we set them a real mission, adapted to their age and school learning and it allows them to broaden their spiritual horizons. This project offers them the opportunity to actively participate in research studies from childhood through to adolescence.

At first, teenagers are given the basic knowledge of the environment and how to use the techniques available. Those who have taken part since the start of the project can then pass their knowledge on to newcomers.

It is planned to collate all the results into a database to publish online.

The extended involvement in this project means that schools can take part in optional lessons or workgroups.

The underlying goal of this project is to encourage teenagers to act in an environmentally-friendly manner. They should learn to understand global changes in the nature of our planet and to help protect the environment. Their generation should not become the victim of panic attacks about climate change but be in the position to recognise and promote sustainable means to protect our environment with the knowledge they've acquired. We want to make this knowledge available to everyone by systematically researching various vital habitats and publishing these results online.

The "Natur Sachsen" project is made up of a number of individual projects focusing on tangible research in aspects of open nature, which serve as a basic introduction. Nevertheless, the subsequent data processing requires additional input from young people. The images and dried plants must be indexed and collated in a database. The goal is to document the plants and animals through photos, many of which are from macro photography, offering new perceptions of life. At the same time a film will be created to document the habitat in question. There is no doubt that these activities will allow these teenagers to come to recognise their strengths and interests.

This discovery of nature is not passive. The project will be open to the public and contribute to the actual protection of these habitats, notably through battling invasive plants in the area concerned.

Public work requires a "public relations department". In addition to being published online, leaflets about the habitats of plants and animals must be created, particularly for presentation in schools and children's gardens. In this light, the plan is to create a leaflet aimed at children to be used in children's gardens in order to convey the right ideas about local nature from a young age. The combination of working in nature and using modern tech-



nologies should inspire many young people about this project. The important point is not to use this work exclusively for one presentation but to make it the cornerstone for future work.

The first two projects "Nature Sachsen – Lebensquell Raumbach" (4) in Reichenbach and "Natur Sachsen – Gartenwelten" (5) in Falkenstein started with the 2010-2011 academic year. It is planned to transform these two sites of the "Schreiberjugend" into educational nature centres by January 2011. The local schools can book lessons there as part of their natural sciences courses. The public will also be offered workshops on vital habitats and the means of protecting them. "Natur Sachsen – Lebensquell Raumbach" will focus on the vital habitat of Raumbach, where there are numerous allotment garden sites.

bach, where there are numerous allotment garden sites.

The goal of this project is to show the positive effect of allotment gardens on the diversity of species. In the first phase, the focus is on identifying the habitats in and around the Raumbach. Teenagers are invited to research rare or endangered species in order to then devise measures to protect them. The river will be monitored throughout different seasons and any changes will be noted.

Through this project we hope to get to know and document the history of the river Raumbach. One of the main aspects will be to inform the public on the invasive plants existing in this vital habitat. Conferences conceived by the

teenagers themselves will therefore take place in the “Altes Wasserwerk” (6), on the former site of the national horticultural show. The society also plans to take charge of looking after this part of Raumbach in order to keep the habitat alive. The Schreiberjugend Sachsen hopes to convert the “Altes Wasserwerk” into an educational centre for nature and thus prolong the horticultural show’s successful model of the “green classroom”.

“Natur Sachsen – Gartenwelten” focuses on a vital habitat created many years ago by man – the allotment garden! This space forms a unique link between humans and nature, offering an almost unnoticed sanctuary for numerous species of plants and animals. Discovering and documenting them will be the first phase of the project. The “Zum Holzbrunnen” allotment gardens in Falkenstein will host a unique project in 2010 to sensibly re-use unoccupied gardens. The plan is to develop a nature garden. This vital “Nature garden park” site will be developed to meet the needs of the local flora and fauna. The park’s central orchard will create a genetic reserve for local fruits. The species which best represent the ancient and original species for the region will be chosen.



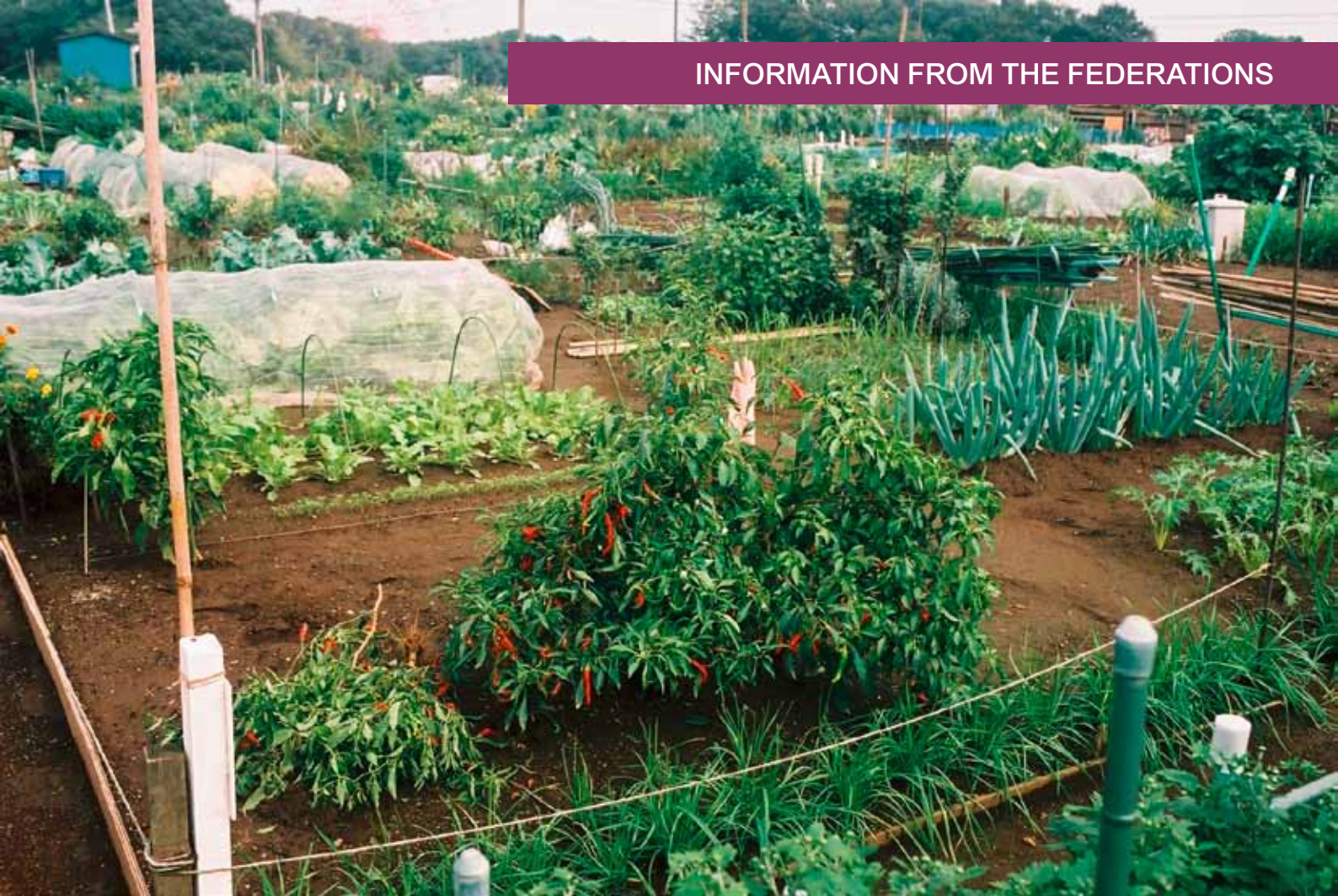
Together the gardeners and teenagers will explore possibilities for contributing to the upkeep and development of the diversity of species at this site and making them accessible to the general public.

The database compiled by these two projects documenting the variety of species will certainly reveal some surprises.

- 1) Youth organisation affiliated to the German allotment garden federation
- 2) Nature Saxony
- 3) To the wooden well
- 4) Nature Saxony-Lifespring Raumbach
- 5) Nature Saxony – Garden World
- 6) Old Waterworks







**Hagidai allotment garden in Chiba**

# Japan: Presentation of the Association for Japan Allotment Garden (2<sup>nd</sup> part)

Yoshiharu MEGURIYA,  
President of the Japanese allotment gardeners

**How the activities of the Association for Japan Allotment Garden are advanced.**

1. The Association promotes the development of new allotment gardens, it supports the social roles that allotment gardens perform, and it publicises the importance of allotment gardens to the wider public. (Enactment of the Allotment Gardens Charter)
2. It trains regional activity leaders with a specialist knowledge of allotment gardens (known as Allotment Garden Coordinators), promotes the formation of allotment associations and supports allotment-related networking activity.
3. It promotes the establishment of regional federations through the efforts of Allotment Garden Coordinators and organised allotment associations, and as their national representative body it promotes the sharing of information and know-how between these organisations.
4. It is building a national network around allotment gardening activities, in cooperation with the relevant government ministry (the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and



**The common planting of vegetable seedlings**

Fisheries), to support the sharing of information and ideas.

**Problems faced by the Association for Japan Allotment Garden and by regional federations**

1. Securing working capital.
2. Spotting good managers and training them up (as a way of passing on responsibility to a newer generation).
3. Securing the confidence and trust of key partners (especially the farmers who provide the land).

Projects:

**1. The Allotment Garden Coordinators System**

Because almost 100% of allotment gardens in Japan are on privately owned land (such as designated agricultural land owned by farmers), they have been developed in a variety of different ways and take a variety of forms. Responsibility for the day-to-day management of allotment sites

rests with individual farmers, who have varying perceptions of what allotments are about, and as a result most allotments lack security. Moreover, allotment users' associations have been slow to develop, and networking between allotment sites is therefore rather limited. As a consequence, there is little sharing of good practice in the establishment and management of allotment sites, and continuity is scarce.

Under these circumstances, regional leaders are needed who can deliver appropriate guidance on-site where allotments are being developed, and offer support to users who wish to organise themselves and engage in networking activity. The Association for Japan Allotment Garden, in partnership with regional federations, has been training Allotment Garden Coordinators to deliver this regional leadership role. The Coordinators have the task of disseminating a better understanding of allotment gardens and building up networks between individual sites. They do so equipped with a fundamental appreciation of and know-how about allotment gardens.

The Association for Japan Allotment Garden certifies as Allotment Garden Coordinators people who have demonstrated through close examination that they have achieved a high level of understanding of allotment gardening issues. The Association runs training sessions for its Coordinators several times a year to sharpen up their skills, and keeps track of the Coordinators' work through formal activity logs.

The Association launched this certification scheme during the 2007 fiscal year. To date it has certified 38 coordinators from 9 of Japan's prefectures (Hokkaido, Miyagi, Saitama, Chiba, Yamanashi, Shizuoka, Osaka, Ehime and Nagasaki), and continues to support these Coordinators in their work.

**2. We sponsor forums and other activities to raise awareness of food-related and environment issues.**

In general the Japanese public has an insufficient level of understanding and concern in relation to food and farming, and as a result Japan has a low rate of food self-sufficiency. Moreover, not enough attention has been given to ways of maintaining green space within cities, as a vital contribution to the battle against global warming. To help rectify this situation, we must raise people's awareness both of the food supply problem (the need to raise the food self-sufficiency rate) and the importance of measures to address global warming and conserve biodiversity. To this end, the Association holds forums to address these themes in urban areas around the country, it sponsors classes in practical growing activity for parents and children, and encourages allotment gardening activity on all fronts.

The Association sponsored a forum in 2007 to enact its "Allotment Gardens Charter", and a small symposium in Tokyo in 2009 with the theme "Why are allotment gardens a necessity in our cities?", and in 2011 we will push ahead with the development of allotment garden networks with support



***Hiraoka-rakumouen in summer in Shizuoko***

from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

3. The Association is supporting the development of allotments in Japan in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, with the aim of achieving a higher level of stability for allotment gardening. Up to now, central government, local authorities and Agriculture Committees alike have been keen to ensure that the maximum rental period for any gardening plot is as short as possible, and users have been unable to organise themselves effectively. As

a consequence, there has been little sharing of good practice in managing sites and little attention given to good cultivation practices and soil improvement, with the result that agricultural land is being devalued through the users' poor cultivation practices. The Association is seeking to address these problems, and to enhance the stability of allotment gardening, by promoting allotment gardens which are based on sound cultivation practices and a firm understanding of good practice in all matters relating to allotment gardening. We aim towards allotments characterised by longer periods of tenure

for users, so that crop rotation and soil improvement can both be undertaken, and good practice in site management and methods of cultivation can be more widely shared. To promote the dissemination of good practice, we support the formation of local allotment associations, and encourage them to network together and engage in the sharing of information. From this year we will be cooperating with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries to advance this aim. We continue to work towards allotment gardens that enjoy greater long-term security.

# A National Meetings

## a) Austria

- Courses for technical advisers
- Courses to get a certificate of aptitudes (use of pesticides)

## b) England

Training for the presidents, secretaries and treasurers of the affiliated associations

## c) Finland

8th October 2011: Meeting of the presidents of the member associations in Hameenlinna

## d) France

- Courses for the executive board members of the affiliated associations
- Participation in several regional meetings organized by the Ministry of Ecology on the reduction of pesticides in non agricultural areas.
- Participation in the creation of an international network on urbanism and nature: The scientific research and citizens' reflexion network on: "Sustainable urban development: the relationship between cities and nature" and the French allotment garden federation agreed to cooperate in the areas of research and education  
From 2010 till 2012 this cooperation will concern:
  - 1) the exchange of experiences on the organisational forms and the evolution of community gardens in France, Russia and Brasil
  - 2) the study of the cultural representations of the soil by the gardeners, the creation of pedagogical material on the knowledge of the ground as well as practices to be promoted
  - 3) the presentation of a European research programme

## e) Germany

- The central German federation (BDG) organizes 7 seminars ( 3 days each) with approximately 50 participants coming from the national federations affiliated to the central federation on following subjects:

Legal questions: - Tax law

- Statutory missions of the associations

Specific gardening matters: - Multiplication of plants made by the gardener himself

- The resource water in the allotment garden

Society and social questions: Choice of projects published in the new brochure

Public relations: Allotment gardens need publicity and external support

- June 19, 2011: Day of the Garden in Koblenz: Opening session for the whole country celebrated in the federal horticultural exhibition
- Participation in the congress: "The future of the Garden"

- 1 - 4th september 2011: 26th general assembly in Heidelberg

## f) Switzerland

- February 11th 2011: 6th nature congress in Basel
- May 21st 2011: 46th general assembly in Wädenswill (Zurich)
- August 2nd 2011: Day of the Garden

## B Documents

### a) Austria

Training material for certified technical advisers  
 Training material for getting the certificate of aptitude (use of pesticides)

### b) Belgium

- The allotment gardens in Belgium
- Document: How many allotments are needed in some small Flemish communes
- Guide for the Flemish local authorities to create allotment gardens
- Survey of the positive and negative points of the existing Flemish allotment garden sites

### c) Germany

Brochure: Final brochure presenting the results of the 22nd federal competition: "Gardens in the townplanning" 2010  
 Weekly garden advice by dpa  
 Monthly garden advice on Internet  
 Monthly newsletter  
 The review: Der Fachberater no. 1 -4 /2010  
 "Grüne Schriftenreihe" no. 206 - 212 in form of a CD

### d) Great-Britain

- Study: What is your plot worth?
- Leaflets on gardening

### e) The Netherlands

Allotment gardening and health: a comparative survey among allotment gardeners and their neighbours without an allotment by Alterra Wageningen

### f) Switzerland

- Information leaflet 2010: Preventing accidents in the garden
- Re-issue of the brochure: A cultivation respectful of nature in the allotment garden
- In preparation: Information leaflet 2011: Bees and wild-bees

## C Useful informations

### a) Belgium

Adoption by the Flemish federation of a strategic plan for the years 2011 - 2015

### b) Finland

Participation in the biggest gardening fair in Finland to be organized in Helsinki from April 7th - 10th, 2011

### c) Germany

- Following to a continuous information of the press, radio and TV present more positive reports. Increased interest
- Publication by the German federation of a collection of projects "For a better future - projects in allotment gardens - Publication in February
- Families with children more and more ask to get an allotment garden

### d) Switzerland

- Following to the initiative of the association in Basel, popular votation concerning the new directives on urban planning
- Popular votation in Berne concerning the closure of an allotment site
- Zurich: fighting the authorities' decision to close down 120 allotment gardens: discussion are going on to get replacement grounds



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# Intergovernmental organisations – Existing partnerships

Wilfried Kreisel, Executive Director of the WHO Office

The Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil in June 1992 heralded a new approach to local, national and international planning for sustainable development. By adopting the principles of the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21, the world's leaders recognised the centrality of human beings and the importance of investing in improvements to people's health and their environment as a pre-requisite for sustainable development.

Indeed, if health is seen not just as the absence of disease, but also as a central goal of sustainable development, then the protection of the environment and the protection of health are mutually supportive. In fact, sustainable development only then becomes a reality if economic development does neither compromise the goal of environmental integrity nor the protection of human health. But although politicians and national planners have long viewed health and environment improvement as a social imperative, the economic costs of protecting and promoting health and environment were perceived as exceeding the subsequent health and environment benefits, and have frequently prevented forceful actions.

## Challenges and actions

However, since the Rio Summit, commitment to securing human health and a healthy environment has become widespread, as evidenced by the process leading to the London Conference. Moreover, the development of national environmental health action

plans is a clear proof of political will to give increased weight to health and environment concerns and progress towards sustainable development.

Intergovernmental organisations have become increasingly involved in international co-operation for a healthy environment. Over the last several years, in fact, WHO Headquarters and Regional Offices have launched a major effort to support countries in developing national health and environmental action plans, and in incorporating health and environment concerns into national planning for sustainable development.

Moreover, major developments take place, which give a stronger health focus in local planning for sustainable development. For example, since Rio, the creation of a large number of local Agenda 21 initiatives, not only in cities, but also in villages and even on islands, developing and implementing their own action plans, many of which feature health and health-related objectives and activities, is a clear demonstration of progress towards sustainable development.

Many intergovernmental agencies are involved in health and environment activities in the context of supporting countries in sustainable development planning and implementation of Agenda 21.

## Examples of co-operation

Several global institutional arrangements and inter-agency initiatives con-

tribute to inter-sectoral approaches to health, environment and development issues. Some examples:

### Water

The Global Water Partnership, dealing with integrated water resources management, and the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council, aiming at the acceleration of the provision of sustainable water supplies and sanitation and waste management services, bring together all major actors in the area of water, forming an alliance of professionals that address key water issues of crucial importance to the survival of mankind.

As part of global efforts related to water, WHO and UNEP have linked up for many years to monitor and assess, for example, the quality of fresh water in lakes and rivers globally within the UNEP Global Environmental Monitoring System – Water (GEMS).

WHO, FAO, and UNEP, later joined by UNCHS (1), are collaborating in reducing vector-borne diseases that can result from water resources development projects. Development policy adjustment, health impact assessment, field research to classify specific health risk factors in water resources development and to test the effectiveness of environmental management interventions, are important aspects of this inter-agency work supported by external experts in Environmental Management for Vector Control (PEEM).



### Chemical substances

The International Programme of Chemical Safety (IPCS), a joint initiative of WHO, ILO (2) and UNEP, among others, carries out risk assessment of a wide range of toxic chemicals, including persistent organic pollutants (POPs) and endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs).

Chemical safety is also being increased through the activities of the Inter-organisation Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC). This is a co-operative agreement established in 1995 between UNEP, ILO, FAO, WHO, UNIDO (3), UNITAR (4) and OECD which promotes co-ordination of the policies and activities pursued by the participating organisations, jointly or separately. IOMC's scientific and technical work is carried out through the existing structures of the participating organisations. Activities undertaken within its framework include risk reduction programmes, harmonisation of classification and labelling of chemicals, and information exchange on chemicals and chemical risks. Furthermore, carried out through inter-governmental processes and supported by IOMC agencies, including UNEP, FAO and WHO, legally binding agreements are being developed on Prior Informed Consent (PIC) and Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs).

### Food

The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission has developed an impressive body of food standards, guidelines, and other recommendations which include, inter alia, maximum limits on pesticides, contaminants and other hazards. While non-compulsory, the work of Codex has been widely accepted because it is based on sound scientific risk assessment. The Codex has become the basis for the international harmonisation that will serve to promote protection of consumers from environmental hazards, while facilitating international trade and food.

### Climate change

In view of the highly inter-disciplinary nature of the relationship between climate change, the environment and human health, work on the Climate Agenda is being co-ordinated by an inter-agency committee in which more than six agencies and programmes participate, including WMO, UNEP, UNESCO, WHO, and the World Climate Programme. The focus of WHO's contribution to work on the climate agenda is geared towards studies of climate impact assessments and response strategies, including disease control services to reduce vulnerabilities.

Following on from the Habitat II Conference held in Istanbul in 1996, efforts by UNCHS have resulted in an open-ended Urban Forum to stimulate a broad-based dialogue and co-ordination of highly cross-sectoral issues related to health and environment in human settlements. Co-operation between UNEP and UNCHS on economically and environmentally sustainable strategies for cities entered a new era in January 1996 when the two agencies embarked upon a full partnership in the European Sustainable Cities & Towns Campaign. While aimed at sound environmental planning, it has linked up, where possible, with WHO's global Healthy Cities programme and the Model Communities programme of the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI). These programmes all recognise the fundamental importance and central role that communities must play in improving urban environments by better integrating environmental, social, economic, health and land use planning considerations at the local level.

### Public health

The Council of Europe, the European Commission and WHO, by joining the Health Promoting School project, acknowledge the importance of investing in the health of the young generation.

The European Commission, through its various Directorates-General, in

particular, DG V/F and DG XXIV, and the European Parliament, through its Committee for the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection, have addressed a broad range of health and environment issues. Directives and decisions have been enacted for the protection of health and the environment of the Union's citizens. This primary and secondary legislation includes subjects such as quality of water intended for human consumption (Council Directive 98/83/EC), ambient air quality assessment and management (Council Directive 96/62/EC), and the ban on advertising and sponsorship of tobacco products (Council Directive 98/43/EC). The development of a new public health policy and corresponding programmes of the European Union, as a consequence of its expanded mandate on health, offers great opportunities to underline its commitment to the protection and promotion of health and the human environment.

While several other agencies, including UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO, ILO, IAEA, UNIDO and the World Bank, are involved individually or as part of inter-agency initiatives in health and environment, WHO is the only agency whose specific role is to protect and promote health. Through its scientific, technical, and normative work and its strong country focus, in particular, the development of a broad range of guidelines and criteria covering environmental media and agents and its technical collaboration with countries and many agencies, progress is being made towards a healthy environment.

- 1) United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)
- 2) International Labour Office
- 3) United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
- 4) United Nations Institute for Training and Research

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***The increase in the number of fields has made it necessary to carry out huge soil movement***

# The rural vernacular habitat, a heritage in our landscape

Franco Sangiorgi, Professor

Rural heritage includes architectural and landscape features. These include dwellings and production units, like stables, piggeries, silos, barns, which have been shaped and developed over time until mechanisation, brought about by industrial development, altered the relationship between people and their land irreversibly and made the need for labour less necessary. Traditionally, rural settlements represent the best synthesis of people's ability to modify the environment to their own advantage with the least

impact; the farming structure provides the elements that characterise the landscape.

The way buildings are shaped depends on: the limits imposed by local resources; the productivity of the farm and the buildings related to the crop system. The lay-out depends on environmental and social factors, including safety.

Recurring materials, shapes and volumes, always connected to local con-

ditions, define specific architectural types that become representative of the various places.

As for the climate, the structure is arranged so as to make the most of local environmental conditions, eg south facing walls are characterised by wide façades and arcades, while north facing ones are thicker.

In many cases, farm buildings were built more than 1.000 years ago, restored and adapted over the centuries,



***Ruins of an old farm in Armenia***

according to the changing demands of farming practices. This constitutes an anomaly when compared with other utility buildings whose life span coincides with the practice that has generated them.

The international community has started taking an interest in rural heritage because of its state of decay. The reasons are economic and social as well as cultural.

The production system, once based on complex crop rotation, is now based on monoculture which leaves fields uncovered for more than seven months. By opting for monoculture or a simplified two-year rotation, cow sheds and barns have become useless and have made old farm buildings and dwellings of no use at all. In Italy, there are more than 5,5 million rural buildings and 1,5 million have been totally abandoned.

While in the past, the use of materials and labour was strictly local and bound to tradition, nowadays, the use

of new technologies and building techniques has introduced elements and styles that are totally foreign to the local environment. The new imposes itself on the old and on the surrounding landscape and, while ignoring any reference to typologies, layout, building techniques. It has a strong visual impact on the landscape. As a consequence the scenario becomes monotonous and huge pre-cast storage buildings stand out against historical farmsteads in ruin. New buildings are the result of international border-free architecture, introduced by industrialisation, which tends to ignore any local value.

The traditional rural building is the cause and the effect of a certain landscape. Farming and natural landscape are not to be confused: the one is the result of people's work and the result of agricultural policies. In order to cut down on production costs, fields are reshaped drastically with consequent dramatic changes to the landscape that becomes more and more simplified.

Meadows and marshy meadows are eliminated and the increase in the number of fields has made it necessary to carry out huge soil movement. Hedges and planting rows have been destroyed and traditional rural buildings are what is left of this impoverished landscape.

Recovery therefore concerns not only buildings but also countryside elements and links up with the idea of sustainable and compatible agriculture, which is clearly against the current trends, based on diseconomies.

Rural heritage means buildings and landscape together, and its safeguard implies careful attention being paid to the changes needed to enhance the local character. This demands a common approach by farmers, policy makers etc. that is difficult to realise.

As long as the traditional rural building keeps its territorial identity, it belongs to the cultural heritage that is worthy of safeguard. Obviously, the reconstruction of a historical scenario, incompat-

ible with modern production, is out of the question, because the rich variety of this traditional landscape, safeguarded in the past by the farmer's constant care, would demand such commitment and a lifestyle which is incompatible with current social trends.

#### Recovery and re-use of old buildings for modern use require careful evaluation of:

- The real re-use potential of the structures within the new production context. The solutions put forward need to be the result of careful examination of the farm organisation, of the produce and of its destiny;
- The management of properties, which would ensure acceptable maintenance standards after the recovery.

Upkeep depends on how much the building is used: a series of functions, compatible with the farm organisation, should be pinpointed so as to make the recovery viable. A priority list for recovery should be defined, starting from the most simple (machinery and equipment storage) to more complex ones such as storage of farm produce, dwellings, farm holidays, B & B etc.

All the proposals put forward acknowledge the need to define land policy aimed at enhancing the value of the heritage of existing rural buildings and promoting recovery by offering proper financial support and/or tax relief.

#### It is therefore necessary to:

- Carry out a detailed analysis of the state of rural buildings within the same area, so as to make it possible to devise coherent restoration guidelines;
- Discover the criteria that led to the choice of these sites where the buildings were constructed;
- List the existing buildings from a historical point of view, so as to define what impact can be admitted in case of restoration;
- Devise restoration methodologies taking into account local customs and usages, so as to promote the ownership and the proper restoration of the building;
- Provide guidelines to reduce to a minimum the impact of supply systems on traditional buildings;
- Decide what the necessary interventions are in order to enhance the value of the landscape and upgrade it;
- Set up, for each geographical area, an inventory of the necessary and available traditional building materials and explain how to use them;
- Promote training courses for workers and make them more aware of the issue;
- Make workers and public opinion aware of the wealth and peculiarity of this heritage and of its importance in the definition of our cultural identity;
- Introduce the notion of recovery of traditional rural buildings, and the micro landscape, into the syllabus

of undergraduates and upper secondary education students.

Undoubtedly, rural buildings are a direct testimony of human activity in a certain place and, if they are left to decay, part of our past will be lost forever. That is to say that the landscape, the environment, the land and the people are part of one and the same unit and that this heritage should be preserved not only as a memory of the past but also as a resource for future development.

The problem of the decay of the rural heritage is common to all countries as is the evolution and the specialisation of agricultural production. The problem becomes more severe where land is not profitable enough. It is therefore necessary to answer this question: is the issue of recovery simply a matter of the recovery of volumes or is it also linked to agricultural practices that provide the building with a context (and the landscape) ?

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*Are the landscapes on either side of national borders different ...?*

## Transfrontier landscapes – a challenge with multiple and sometimes conflicting approaches

Andreas Stalder,  
Vice-Chairman of the CDPATEP

### Transfrontier landscapes – conflicting approaches ?

Under Article 9 of the European Landscape Convention (Florence Convention of 20 October 2000), the Parties undertake to encourage transfrontier co-operation at local and regional level and to implement joint landscape projects. What does this mean in practice? At first sight, this provision seems to contradict itself. It can only really be

understood and have any effect if it is read and understood in the spirit of the Convention and the other provisions. As we shall see, considerable political astuteness is required to interpret this article and put it into practice.

The central starting point is respect for the principle of subsidiarity and national constitutional principles, in other words the territorial organisation of the

state concerned and the division of powers (Article 4). As a rule, relations with other states are a central government responsibility, but there are exceptions to this of varying degrees in a number of countries

Furthermore, the concept of landscape on which the Convention is based requires co-operation between regional authorities, stakeholders and

the public to identify landscapes, categorise them, set protection and development goals and, of course, devise joint transfrontier landscape projects. The challenge of the participatory approach is to cater for regional populations' needs while taking account of increasing mobility and their remoteness from their native regions, without however creating total uniformity. In practice this means that participation is possible only if it is guided by (regional) experts and by specialists with an understanding of wider landscape issues.

The discrepancy pointed out above should on no account be a barrier to promoting transfrontier landscapes and landscape projects. On the other hand, the public and the stakeholders do need to be made aware of the principles behind the approach to landscape and of regional and local landscapes values. Only in this way can these specific values then serve to foster a sense of identification with landscape and raise its profile, and become a "unique selling proposition". Creative problem-solving and close, preferably non-bureaucratic, co-operation are required between each country's different sub-state tiers of government (vertical co-operation) and between the official bodies at all levels of the various states concerned (horizontal co-operation). Actual landscape projects often arise not as the result of a specific landscape policy but as the by-product of a sectoral policy relevant to landscape (policy drivers), or are triggered by specific spatial conflicts. The watchword is multi-sectoral co-operation within States and between the different States involved, as this is the only way of ensuring that what emerges is not just a random "residual landscape", but a real landscape development project based on clear and comprehensible foundations and goals.

## Transfrontier landscapes – a multitude of approaches

Transfrontier landscapes also give us the opportunity to become aware of the multitude of natural habitats, cultures, mentalities and historical developments in Europe and the landscape development to which this has given rise. Causes and consequences, starting points and subsequent developments – often these things defy explanation, and often they are even interchangeable with one another. They show us that everything can be seen and interpreted from different viewpoints, and also be used for different purposes. Even the interpretation of the term "transfrontier landscape" varies and is often ambiguous:

- What frontiers are we talking about? Territorial boundaries? Or topographical, climatic, cultural, linguistic, religious, ethnic, geological or mental boundaries?
- Are the landscapes on either side of national borders different because they have developed differently or is the border there because natural conditions have shaped different landscapes, and different peoples and people have used and developed them differently?
- Are landscapes shaped by man-made territorial boundaries or are they the result of functional links and dependencies?
- Are rivers the arteries of landscapes, and mountains their backbones, or do rivers and mountains separate different landscapes? Where a national frontier is marked by a river or mountains, is that a natural or an artificial boundary?
- Some landscapes force humans to surpass themselves while others bring them up against their limits.

- If landscapes are progressively losing their character and hence their identity, then their frontiers are also fading and vanishing. If that is the case, can we talk about landscapes any more?
- Virtual landscapes involve any number of stakeholders, can be anywhere, have no beginning or end, and have no frontiers. If that is the case, can we talk about frontiers any more?
- What is the future for landscapes?

I hope that by exploring the "borderlines" of landscape, we can encourage a fresh understanding, build bridges and join together in developing new approaches. Let us give a new meaning to frontier landscapes so that Europe can continue to boast such a great variety of landscapes !

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