



# Hyphen 48

Office International du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux  
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# Importance of allotment gardening

Chris Zijdeveld,  
President of the International Office



CHRIS ZIJDEVELD

The importance of allotment gardens is largely unknown or underestimated in most countries. The importance of allotment gardens definitely needs to be more broadly known and acknowledged.

## Don't push us to the outskirts

In spite of the fact that some countries have laws to protect and promote allotment gardens, the importance of these gardens seems not (not yet or no more) to be recognised everywhere and by everyone. On the contrary: in some cases allotments are considered to be easy targets if a new building site has to be developed. This ignores the fact that ideally seen allotment gardens should be an integral part of the urban environment, instead of only being pushed to the outskirts.

## Many positive aspects of integration

There are successful examples where allotments reinforce urban communities, being an integral part of it, cooperating with neighbours and being a valuable and appreciated part of their environment. Not only in housing areas but even in areas with office buildings.

## 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 threat 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).

## WHAT IS NEEDED?

If we want allotment gardening to survive and preferably getting more acknowledge for its importance, it is necessary that the advantages of allotment gardening becomes broader known in society. On all levels: municipal, regional, national and above national. And in society in general as well as with decision makers, both areas reinforcing each other. That should be one of the main tasks of our Office. I should like to move the Office into a direction where it brings this message with a strong voice and reinforces national societies in spreading this message in different countries. And the movement in itself should be reinforced on the broadest possible level: the gardeners themselves. It is about external visibility and internal support and acceptance. I hope we will all agree and cooperate in this direction.

# Decision protocol of the general assembly held in Copenhagen on 18th August, 2011

Were present: the federations of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great-Britain, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland and Sweden

Was represented: the federation of Switzerland

Were absent: the federations of Norway and Slovakia

- 1) The agenda is completed and then adopted with unanimity.
- 2) The reports of the general assembly held in Luxembourg are adopted with unanimity.
- 3) The resolutions to support the allotment gardeners in Berlin and Stockholm to safeguard the threatened allotment gardens are adopted with unanimity.
- 4) The affiliation fee for 2012 remains unchanged compared to 2011.
- 5) C. ZIJDEVELD speaks about his work on the survey of the federations' innovative projects.
- 6) The Swiss federation has presented a provisional programme for the study session in 2012.
- 7) On proposal of the executive board the delegates decide with unanimity that the Office will pay the costs of the technical equipment for the simultaneous translation.
- 8) The proposals of the executive board in order to increase the efficiency of the Office are discussed and agreed upon. In the future these proposals can still be completed.
- 9) An Internet forum has been created on the Office Homepage. The subject of a sustainable use of pesticides will be the first project to be discussed in this forum.
- 10) The federations are requested to urgently send the corrections of their data for the new information brochure to the general secretariat.
- 11) The national projects to illustrate the social function of the allotment garden movement have to be sent to the general secretariat before 1st of September.
- 12) On invitation of the Polish federation three Office delegates will take part in the 2nd Polish allotment garden congress in Warsaw on 22nd September 2011.

# The allotment gardens of the future

## XXXVIth International Congress of Allotment Gardens held in Copenhagen from 18th – 20th August 2011

Representatives of the Office International du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux, the international allotment garden federation, which is associating 3 million allotment gardeners in Europe have been gathered in Copenhagen 18th – 20th August 2011 for their XXXVIth International Congress. At the closing of the Congress they have unanimously adopted the following resolution:

Allotment gardens play an essential role in offering both possibilities for recreation and supply of healthy garden products to people with no other access to green land. The allotment garden has at the same time become one of the only places where younger generations from urban areas can discover nature and learn how to cultivate garden products.

Finally, both training of trustees by the allotment garden federations and many other allotment gardeners participation in management activities in their societies ensure valuable organizational training to those involved. These contributions to social life by our allotment gardens are still essential.

Our allotment gardens are not only serving as a green spot of leisure and learning for those who live in them, however. The gardens equally serve a number of other purposes in society – purposes that will become increasingly important in the years to come.

The many open allotment garden sites offer green space to everybody in urban areas – being the green lungs of our cities. Many allotment garden societies furthermore contribute to social life through integration of immigrants and through social activities for children and for elderly or disabled people from their neighbourhood.

Moreover, the allotment gardens – often sheltering a broad variety of plant species - have become an important part in safeguarding biodiversity and at the same time an inspirational example to others by applying organic gardening principles.

We, the representatives of European family and allotment gardeners are determined to continue to develop our movement in order to ensure its contribution to a sound and nature

friendly development in society. Our priorities in this respect will be further strengthening the social and ecological aspects of allotment gardening as well as emphasizing the important role of allotment gardens in public urban planning.

Attracting young families is another high priority for our movement. We are determined to continue efforts to develop allotment garden sites that are shaped and equipped to meet the requirements of our younger generations and we will support and facilitate their integration in our garden societies. We are equally determined to continue to be open also to groups in society who do not have a traditional link to our movement – but who are willing to share our ideals.

Our movement and activities have both a national and European perspective. We therefore call on national authorities as well as the European Union to recognize the efforts of our movement and to support and stimulate the protection and creation of allotment and family gardens in our countries.

Preben JACOBSEN  
President

Wilhelm WOHATSCHEK  
Chairman of the executive board

Malou WEIRICH  
Secretary general

# Retrospective in pictures from Copenhagen



Opening session: Bagpipers



Entrance of the new Office-flag



Opening of the congress by president Preben Jacobsen



Video-message by Mrs Vivane Reding,  
Vice-president of the European Commission



Address by secretary general Malou Weirich



Presentation of the Golden Rose to Mr Michel Labardin  
mayor of Gradignan (F)



Presentation of the diploma on an ecological gardening to the association „Freiheit“ in Berlin (D)



Presentation of the diploma on an ecological gardening to the association „Falan“ in Falun (S)



Presentation of the diploma on an ecological gardening to the association „Zonnehoek“ in Amsterdam (NL)



Presentation of the diploma for social activities to the association „Heideland“ in Braunschweig (D)



Workshops



Workshops



Reception in the townhall by Mrs Lise Thorsen, member of the Copenhagen City council



Allotment gardens in Copenhagen



Achim Friedrich during the round table discussions



Wilhelm Wohatschek draws the conclusions of the congress works



Signing of the resolutions



Transmission of the presidency from Preben Jacobsen (DK) to Chris Zijdeveld (NL)



# The allotment gardeners from Norway present themselves

## Structure

16 associations, 3,000 members (including 1,600 applicant members in line for an allotment)

## Allotment gardens

1,400 allotment gardens, with an average size of 250 sq metres, exclusively leased land.

## Administration

Voluntary work, one part-time employee

## Ownership

All land leased from local authority

The Norwegian federation of allotment gardeners has its offices in Torggata 10, 0181 in central Oslo in cooperation with the Oslo branch of the federation. It unites 16 associations in four Norwegian towns with 3,000 members (including 1,600 applicants in line for an allotment garden). The average size of an allotment garden is 250 sq metres. The overall total of allotment gardens is 56 hectares.

Each allotment is connected to a water supply. Electricity is widely available. The yearly rent is up to 1 € per sq metre. The annual contribution to the federation is 1 €.

The federation employs a part-time office secretary, but the vast majority of the work in the organisation is done voluntarily by the elected members

Norsk Kolonihageforbund is a small organisation with a modest number of members. Promotion for allotment gardens started in Norway early in

the twentieth century but never managed to grow to a size similar to what we see in other Scandinavian and European countries. Allotment gardens have never gained a natural place in Norwegian City planning and organizing.

This can be partly explained by the fact that the country has a small population, less than 5 million, settled in low density areas and in only a few cities with heavy industry and poor living conditions.

Still the Norwegian allotment gardeners claim that the gardens have an important mission for the welfare of the city population in a modern society. But no new allotment garden has been created for 60 years, with an exception for a rebuilding in Trondheim in 1988.

In general the Norwegian federation lacks the strength of heavy lobbying, but continues to pursue the promotion of allotment gardens as a main ideological and political aim.



*Allotment garden site in Oslo*



*Allotment garden in the site „Rodeløkkens“ in Oslo*



*Allotment gardens in Versailles*

# The allotment gardeners from France present themselves

## Structure

National federation, 200 independent associations, 50 local committees, 75 allotment garden sites in the Ile de France directly administered by the federation representing a total of 25,000 members

## Allotment gardens

25,000 allotment gardens with an average size of 160 sq metres established on grounds:

- belonging to the federation or :
- belonging to the town authorities

linked to the associations by a convention for a free of charge use of these grounds or:

- rented from private owners

## Administration

Voluntary ;  
10 paid employees

## Ownership

65% of the grounds belong to communal land owners, 20% to the federation, 10% to associations, 5% to private landowners

at least through a collective electricity point. The annual contribution to the national federation is 11.90 € per allotment garden.

The National Federation is a foundation member of the National Council of Community and Allotment gardens (Conseil National des Jardins Collectifs et Familiaux - CNJCF). It has concluded a partnership with the league for bird protection (LPO) and the Noé Conservation (association for the protection of biodiversity).

The national federation for allotment and community gardens (Fédération Nationale des Jardins Familiaux et Collectifs) is based in 75015 Paris, 12 rue Félix Faure. It has 200 independent associations and 50 local committees. They represent a total of 25,000

allotment gardens. The average size of a plot is 160 sq metres and the overall total of allotment gardens is 500 hectares. The allotments are not always connected to a water supply, but have access to a common water point. Electricity is partially available

At governmental level the allotment gardens fall within the remit of the Minister of Agriculture. It has also close relations with the Minister for Environment Protection. The government supports the activities of the federation by a law adopted in 1976 guarantee-

ing on one hand a protection against expropriation and granting on the other hand fiscal advantages.

The federation proposes four training sessions per year to the board members of its affiliated associations. These courses concern the history of the federation and the different services provided for the members: statutes and internal regulation, insurances, bookkeeping, relations with local politicians.

65% of the grounds belong to the local authorities, 20% to the federation, 10% to the associations and 5% to private owners. The use of the land as allotment gardens is obligatory. The land is only to be used for the cultivation of vegetables and fruit for the gardeners' own consumption. So 2/3 of the allotment garden plot has to be used for the cultivation of fruit and vegetables.

The member associations and local committees are administered on a voluntary basis. Only the federation has 10 employees at its centre.

The allotment gardens can be equipped with a tool shed, with a maximum size of 4 sq metres. It is forbidden to use them as a perma-



**Allotment gardens in Bédier Boutroux**

nent dwelling. Overnight stays are also forbidden. The individual sheds are neither connected to electricity nor to drinking water, but every site has several water points for watering the plants.

On the communal areas only the more important buildings which are necessary for the running of the allotment garden sites (meeting rooms, office rooms and common toilets) are allowed. Since 1976 the existing law in

favour of the allotment gardens stipulates a protection against expropriation. The payment of compensation and the provision of replacement is required when the existing allotment garden land becomes needed for another public use.

The federation adopted in 2007 a Charter on gardening and the environment, calling for gardening practices which are respectful of nature and biodiversity. The federation has also published brochures on allotment gardens and social habitat, allotment gardens and urbanism, composting, etc. It invests largely and in an effective way in making the public aware of allotment gardening which has led to a positive change to its image.

The member associations organise many social projects. We can mention for example gardens aiming at the re-assimilation of young offenders into society, gardens for handicapped and elderly people, school gardens and learning gardens as well as places to educate and to meet for both allotment gardeners and hobby gardeners who are not member of the federation.



**Allotment gardens in Maison Alfort**

# Project: ecological gardening: A nature trail through the city

Michael Jubelt

In August 2008 the allotment garden association „Freiheit“ in Berlin had the idea of creating a nature trail within an ornamental and educational garden. The women’s group of the association called the “Schnippelgirls” had just financed the equipment for the site’s playground.

Next they considered how the allotment garden site could even be made more attractive for young and adult visitors and how they could at the same time make a contribution to environment and nature education.

After an important investigation it quickly became clear that even the smallest nature trail would exceed the financial capacity of its initiators. How could such a project be financed and realised? Over several months the group tried to find interested people, sponsors and partners. They needed both financial and technical support. With the help of the partners and

sponsors who could be found, especially the Foundation for Nature Protection in Berlin, a detailed concept for the nature trail could finally be spelled out. Mistakes could be avoided at the earliest planning stage.

Who needs a nature trail? It was clear that the nature trail should aim above all at making children aware of nature. Targets were the children of the allotment gardeners, the neighbours and the whole area. But adult visitors should be not forgotten either. Already before the new project started, the allotment garden site was a green oasis for many citizens in the middle of a dense residential area. It was used by elderly people for their walks and for having some relaxation near their homes.

The practical realisation could be done within a very short time.

In September 2010 after only four



*Dendrophon*



*A path to walk barefoot*



*Nest building help for birds*

months of work the building phase was finished. The nature trail is a round walk through the whole site and is open free of charge for all visitors during the gardening season. Thirteen stops have been built and have been provided with exhibition boards. They give in various forms information about nature. You can find an insect hotel here, an ornamental and educational garden used as a green class room, a fruit bush for birds and insects, a street for tasting fruit, a heap of branches and a dry wall to allow hedgehogs to live here. There is also a board with models explaining different ways of how to help birds nesting, a herb garden, a dendrophon as well as a model beehive and a quiz station.

# Intercultural project: A common point: The love for gardening

Manfred Weiß, Martina Krüger

In 2007 the first intercultural allotment garden of Braunschweig was inaugurated in the allotment garden site "Heideland".

Three times a week refugees and migrant persons coming from different backgrounds, neighbours and interested citizens, of all different ages, and having different ways of living meet together in this garden.

What unites them all is the love of gardening. The use of the garden as a meeting point favours the mutual understanding and reinforces the awareness of the personal situation of the refugees. Many refugees suffer from the pressure of traumatic events. They migrated to a new country without their families and sometimes suffer physically from the consequences of wars and catastrophes. A garden aims at helping them to feel at home



in this new environment. M. Armineh der Avanesia, a member of the association, helping the refugees called Refugium expressed it in the following way: "A garden is a medicine without side effects". Gardening helps people to recover.

Beside the gardening activities the use of the intercultural garden as a meeting point offers a space for many other activities. The participants in the project meet here in order to cook to-

gether and exchange ideas. They can relax in the allotment garden. There exists also the possibility of a regular information exchange as for example among others information about the garden and herbs, seminars on health and social political issues. Courses to learn German are also planned.

This was preceded by five months of very hard work during which an abandoned area of 800 sq metres with a broken down shed was transformed with the help of these new allotment gardens into a colourful garden. This garden was then divided into many small plots. People from eleven different nations for example Haïti, Ruanda and Syria, can now grow their fruit and vegetables according to their own ideas and in their own gardening traditions.

Meanwhile the first new gardeners have participated in a basic course to become technical advisers and have learned many things about composting and gardening care.

In the future the intercultural garden should be autonomously administered by participants involved in this project.

# France: Sustainable city development network: Between Kazan and Ris-Orangis, in the eyes of a gardener

Gil Melin,

President of the Ris-Orangis gardens, Member of the Board of the FNJFC and Director of the Bergerie Nationale de Rambouillet adult training centre



## Change of reference

With the huge shock over, what can I take away from this mission where we lacked sufficient time to gain a more comprehensive understanding rather than one formed by an emotional reaction?

I discovered and met all too briefly the “entry-level” gardeners from three garden groups. Marcel Marloie and Louise Boukharaeva knew of these groups and their main characteristics.

So, I will try to present a balanced rather than biased view and put down in writing my impressions from this brief

glimpse of a group that I didn't know existed except for a few points presented at the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme seminar on 20th May. However, their immaterial nature left such a weak mark on me that it was virtually non-existent. I had nothing more than a few preconceptions about the sheer size of the space and remarkable number of allotments, and about the survival of their occupants thanks to their gardens and vegetables.

Seeing the reality, as brief as it was, brushed all the clichés aside, all the assumptions inherent in ignorance. The depiction forged by our self-im-

portance in a superabundant society which is so sure of its civilised values has been shattered. The image of our little allotment gardens, where we attempt to reconstruct social tissue destroyed by ostentatious individualism, is far removed from the history of Russian gardens and their newly emerging role in a revolutionary privatisation movement.

However, without pretending to understand the evolution of Russia over the last decade, it may be interesting to try to compare and gain practical training on how to manage the different types of gardens, in both France and Russia.

**A look at Francilien gardens**

My views on French allotment gardens will be taken from the gardens created in Ris-Orangis from 1998 onwards. I do not want to embrace the situation in France as a whole, but my position on the Board of the Fédération Nationale des Jardins Familiaux et Collectifs (FNJCF) does enable me to expand the sphere to the entire Ile-de-France area.

The individual and collective needs of the French allotment gardeners are currently changing radically and are therefore very different from one family to another. This means that those who manage them must be much focused in order to satisfy all of the individual needs and society demands of backers or politics. These demands affect ancient horticultural practice, with little concern for the environment.

Therefore those responsible must integrate many different needs into their management. Needs linked to purchase power, to nature, health, social cohesion and integration, technical horticultural competencies and scientific knowledge.....



This combination of social factors means that demand erupts in urban areas: 180 families on the waiting list in a city of 25,000 inhabitants which already has 180 allotments, more than 2,000 families seeking an allotment in the Ile-de-France, no matter how far from their home.

The economic need to buy quality vegetables at the best price seems to have been increasing for a while. This knowledge is very delicate be-

cause people do not openly reveal these humbling truths. It would surely be better to analyse this evolving phenomenon.



The opportunities to socialise created by leisure activities and conviviality, as well as the chance to invite friends or family around for a barbecue, have certainly not disappeared. These have been supported by the motivation of certain leaders, who want to create a community spirit through organising various social gatherings to integrate and unite the different cultures. Equally, the ability to support a broken spirit or to rediscover a joie de vivre through these activities has collateral benefits.



**Gardening also allows the gardeners to be valued by others:**

- Aesthetic valuation, which is demonstrated by seeking “free” embellishment or the reward of a local or national competition.
- Valuation of the production of good quality vegetables of which to be proud and to take pleasure in sharing or giving them to others to demonstrate their abilities as a producer.
- Parents’ valuation vis-a-vis their children, in a world where the parents’ workplace often seems a million miles away. Tasting a strawberry, a radish or a lettuce will re-assert the paternal or maternal image damaged by redundancy or unemployment.



In addition to this pleasure, children also have the right to a varied learning space combining both personal freedom and the possibility to discover the differences and rules to follow:

- Free space to learn to ride a bike, to discover nature, even if it is or-

ganised, and for spontaneous games using the different features of the soil and land (ponds, ditches, mounds).

- Learning the differences by being around other parents and families with other domestic traits to nourish, organise and occupy the area.
- Learning to respect the rules around plants, and then progressing to the first stages of horticulturalism by copying others.

In parallel to evaluating the aims of community gardens, realising the environmental effects of poor horticultural practice has been increasingly stimulated by certain garden association directors who know the principles of managing culture ecologically. Over the last ten years France has seen the emergence of environmental charters adopted and promoted by the national federation of community gardens.

It has become a strong axis on which the assembly of the large federations within the Conseil National des Jardins Collectifs et Familiaux is based. After summarising the ideas of these charters into 14 principles, the Conseil National has taken the decision to appoint people responsible for the gardens. The latter will impart the knowledge and know-how the gardeners need to adopt for a democratic and structured system from the bottom up, summed up by the slogan « Connaitre et comprendre pour agir » (“Know and understand to act”).

#### A look at Kazan gardens



#### The aviation factory gardens

Rapidly changing gardens due to the law on access rights to the land, where the management seems a little opaque, and where I sense a stark contrast between an elderly gardener struggling to manage her partly neglected allotment and the spruce 60s' style dacha garden house with its clever or striking decorations and their three generations.

#### The TITAN gardens

Gardens that seem to me rather like a pioneer village after colonising free



land like a far-east region, which manage the space by modernising it with electricity, gas for more permanent residences, plush dachas with floors and outbuildings and outside “bagna”. The vast gardens of 600 to 1,000 square metres have a vegetable garden and an ornamental garden bordered with little red fruit bushes, gooseberries, raspberries...

#### The veterans' gardens

Gardens with a communal spirit as they seem to be targeted by property developers. There is a feeling of a team wanting to battle for certain values and having a vision of the future, rather than the simple access to the individual property. The plots (those that we saw) were less well-maintained. Is there a lack of means? Are



there less technical competencies? Or is it the result of the property developers' targeting?

#### To be followed





*Allotment gardens in Gentbrugge*

# Belgium: 2011-2015 strategic plan in Flanders (1st part)

Noël Ghesquiere,  
secretary of the Flemish association of allotment gardens

The administrative board of the "Vlaamse Volkstuin" (Flemish association of popular gardens) has deemed it necessary and useful to bring a large amount of attention and resources to its planned activities for 2011-2015. It seems that a strategy is necessary not only to meet compulsory regulations in order to become recognised and

funded, but also to act as a first step towards a better and more efficient organisation: how can we improve the way we work and organise ourselves more effectively in the future? It is a first step towards an entire quality service (what do we do, what can be done in future and how can we do it effectively and in the best way possible?)

The regulatory framework was laid out in the administrative board's meeting on the 24th of October 2009 (which rules apply to our association, and what resources the authorities allocate to recognised associations).

It was decided that a demand should be presented in order to achieve rec-



**Allotment gardens in St. Amandsberg**

ognition for our association as a socio-cultural organisation.

A detailed plan was approved in the administrative board's meeting on the 23rd of January 2010. It was agreed that we would work through 7 consecutive stages, and the first action was to form the management committee.

This committee is formed of a director and representatives from the different provincial federations (Anvers, Limbourg, Brabant-flamand, East Flanders and West Flanders).

The process for the strategic plan got under way on the 11th of March 2011. The 7 stages are intertwined with the appointed committee throughout the process, and they look after the issue of "good governance" along with the obligations imposed by law and regulations, in addition to the demands of the relevant administration.

The result of this approach will be a coherent strategy based on facts and with pertinent and realistic objectives. It was all developed through a contemplative and calculated strategy.

**1st stage: Structure, mission and mandate of the management committee**

A planning committee, made up of six members, was formed by the administrative board. This committee was tasked with creating the strategic plan.

At the same time it was decided to keep those involved, the administrative board, or the general assembly, constantly informed of the process status.

**2nd stage: Mission**

The planning committee refined the mission. This mission must show who the organisation is, what it does and how, for whom, and the fundamental values of the association.

**3rd stage: Gathering the data**

Gathering the data is at the core of our strategy: all the choices, objectives and decisions emanate from this data. We interviewed a number of those involved, and this obviously created a significant amount of data. At this stage we went down four routes:

- The first track gives us a description

of the organisation as it was in the past and what it has become today.

- The second track leads us to interview those involved, particularly all of those who are linked in some way or other to the organisation. Internal interviewees were members of staff and voluntary contributors, for example. External interviewees were the authorities or customers (participants, members), for example.
- The third route is the internal gathering of data. The organisation will look at itself to identify its good and not-so-good points, where it works well and not-so-well, and its strengths and weaknesses.
- After the internal evaluation comes the evaluation of environmental factors. The organisation will research the opportunities or threats resulting from society as a whole: what developments or changes influence the organisation and make it function with more ease or difficulty, etc.

**4th stage: Analysing the data**

The data analysis forms the final step in gathering the data.

The planning committee now has a mass of data: elements of the organisation's history, details of its current function, remarks and suggestions from the interviewees, results of the internal evaluation, and the data from analysing the wider surroundings. There is a real danger that the planning committee could drown in the mass of information and not know where to start or what to do with it.

Analysis is all well and good, but the team must ultimately arrive at a synthesis.

To create a bit of order amidst this mass of data, we worked in line with the principles of the SWOT analysis. This analysis works on the basis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for organisations.

**5th stage: Objectives**

The most important work is the formulation of strategic and operational

objectives, and the development of a strategy to reach these objectives.

The objectives are more a description of “what this organisation wants to/can/is going to achieve during the next management period.” However, it does not contain the “how” which is key, but more the “what” based on the result. You can already see that two elements are very important: the result to be achieved and the “how”. These two elements form the basis of a good objective.

#### **6th stage: The strategy**

When setting objectives it is also necessary to plan what resources will be used to reach these objectives. Next, you have to see if the plan is possible. Does the organisation have enough manpower and is it capable? Does the organisation have sufficient financial backing? Does the plan meet regulatory requirements? Is everything above board? How can this plan effectively be carried out over the coming years? During the 6th stage, the emphasis is on developing the strategic part of the plan. Most of all, you have to think about financial resources.

#### **7th stage: Evaluation and adjustment**

A strategic plan filled with good indicators offers additional opportunities to direct and control the organisation.

However, this advantage only exists if the plan is closely followed and if you occasionally check that it is developing in such a way (i.e. quick enough and in the right direction) as to reach the standards set at the end of the management period. For that purpose, frequent reviews and interim evaluations are needed.

After the strategic plan was approved, the administrative board made a decision as to how, where and by whom the different parts of the plan would be followed and evaluated.

12 assessment criteria were also set, and the plan has sufficient indicators of result and management to serve as a basis for progress reports. The layout was considered and discussed. The final version was approved by a general assembly and by all members during a congress, which took place on the 18th of September 2010.

The directing committee debriefed the administrative board on the 22nd of May 2010 (agenda number 5), the 10th of June 2010 (agenda number 3) and the 11th of September 2010 (agenda number 2).

On the 27th of March 2010 the general assembly approved our federation's mission and on the 18th of September 2010 it approved the strategic and operational objectives for the period 2011-2015.

A congress was organised on the 18th of September for all of the members and for the presidents of 200 local affiliated branches. During this meeting we discussed, among other things, our organisation's mission and explained the strategic and operational objectives of the VZW (“De Vlaamse Volkstuin-Werk van de Akker”).

#### ***To be continued***

# Switzerland: Popular vote in Basel and Berne on allotment gardens

Werner Fricker

On 15th May 2011 popular vote took place in the towns of Basel and Berne regarding the future of the local allotment gardens. The citizens were asked if these sites could be closed down and buildings be erected on this land. As at the same time there was no election on national questions, one could expect a very low turn out. Only approximately 35 % of the persons being eligible to vote went to the polling station.

In Basel the so called “counter-proposal” was adopted with an overwhelming majority. It is a compromise as far as the protection of allotment gardens is concerned. This compromise was reached during very difficult

negotiations having lasted over two years with the socialist/green coalition government. The government wanted to use these areas for the construction of flats. To put this into perspective one has to understand that the town of Basel has only an area of 37 sq kilometres and is built up everywhere to its borders with its 160,000 inhabitants (and with important areas reserved for the chemical industries). Therefore many allotment garden sites of the town of Basel are situated in the canton of Baselland next to Basel and even in France. There is even one site situated in the canton of Solothurn 20 kilometres away. These external sites are at the moment not threatened. The adopted counter-proposal now states

that 80 % of the gardens in the territory of Basel town are protected and that only 20 % can be closed down over the next years for new buildings. The proposal to safeguard 100 % of the allotment gardens, which had been first suggested by the allotment gardeners and which was also submitted to the referendum, had no chance of success.

The situation is somewhat different in the town of Berne. This town has many areas of green space and even some agricultural land. The acting socialist/green government coalition still wants to build more flats for people. It therefore intends to close down the allotment garden sites and



Poster against the protection of the allotment gardens in Basel

preferably all of them at once. Despite the fact that the allotment gardeners had put in a huge effort to support their objective – a short leaflet was posted through all the letter boxes throughout the town – the building project „Holligen“ was adopted in the referendum. Consequently the site “Mutachstrasse” with 80 garden plots, situated in a working class area, will be closed down. Fortunately the other side of the road still contains the even bigger site “Schlossmatte”, which should have been closed down 20 years ago. At that time the population was better disposed towards the allotment gardeners.

In the Town Parliament discussions concerning the construction project „Holligen“ were still going on. During these debates a conservative politician said this allotment garden site produced the most expensive potatoes in the whole of Switzerland!



Poster for the protection of the allotment gardens in Basel

# Switzerland: Study session 2012 in Zurich

## Walter Schaffner

The next study session will take place in Zurich from 23rd till 26th August, 2012. On Saturday 25th August we will also celebrate the European Day of the Garden. Switzerland is happy to welcome back the European federations after having hosted the international congress in Lausanne in 2000.

We have already started the preparatory works in Waldshut in January 2011 together with the Dutch federation. The basic ideas for the next meetings are as follows:

In Switzerland in 2012 we will discuss the basic questions of the topic.

In Germany in 2013 the results of 2012 will be deepened.

In the Netherlands in 2014 the results will be presented.

Every federation will be invited to create on a voluntary basis a publicity film, a slide show, or a Powerpoint presentation on its own movement. No text is required. The pictures should speak for themselves.

An analyst will present the subject. Information will be given on ignored facts.

The films and presentations will be presented to small groups.

The results will be discussed.

The analyst will make a summary of his impressions.

(The analyst will take part in all three meetings)

The subject will be closed by a conclusion.

On basis of these films, DVD or presentations, the Office can for example produce a publicity spot or an information film.



### *Allotments in Marjaniemi*

# Finland: Marjaniemi Allotment Gardens in Helsinki: Environmental Committee promotes ecological way of life

Text and photos: Tuija Lujanen-Lampi and Maija Roinila

Marjaniemi Allotment Association was set up in 1946. An ecological way of life has been one of its basic principles ever since the beginning. It has been and still is – an objective of the association to provide its members with a possibility to spend collective leisure cultivating decorative plants and vegetables near one’s home. Nowadays the values communicated by this objective are known as principles of sustainable development.

Today allotment gardeners – like the rest of the population - are faced with challenges concerning how well the choices we make and activities we perform support the wellbeing of the environment. It is a complicated ecological challenge, but not an impossible one. With this challenge in mind it was decided a few years ago by the Association that a new committee would be set up. The committee was named “The Environmental Committee.”

It is the purpose of the Committee to actively and regularly promote an environmentally friendly way of life and to keep up discussion as to how to live one’s daily life ecologically. Globally, everybody is responsible for the wellbeing of the environment and must pay attention to the legislation and act accordingly.

It is the task of the Environmental Committee to organize various kinds



**Compost on a plot**

of events for Marjaniemi allotment gardeners where it is possible for them by listening, discussing and asking questions to learn about ecological alternatives, procedures and operation models. Ecological gardening is a wide subject including for example responsible choice of building and other materials, ecological cultivation of crops, use of environmentally friendly methods of bug killing, composting at one's own plot, waste handling as regulated by the community and respect for community values. The Committee has published a guide called "Environmental Guide for Allotment Gardeners in Marjaniemi". There are practical advice and hints about ecological leisure and cultivation in the Guide.

For the Committee to work effectively it is essential that a few members commit themselves actively. An action plan is prepared for each year. Lectures, training sessions and other events are planned carefully in advance. Practicality is the key word and it is a pleasure for the Committee to notice that gradually Marjaniemi allotment gardeners have become more environmentally conscious and their ecological know-how has been increased. If requested, veteran allotment gardeners gladly share their knowledge and experiences with the newcomers. An ecological way of life



**Composting toilets**

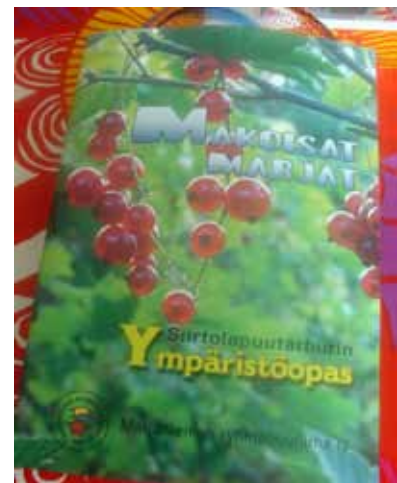
is slowly gaining ground and becoming a habit for many allotment gardeners. It is the purpose of the Committee to guarantee for future generations the pleasures of allotment gardening – in order to do that they need to take care of the well being and beauty of the environment.

**Profit and pleasure combined**

The Ecological Committee organizes lectures and workshops as well as training courses and discussions for the members of the association. How to compost on my plot? How to integrate vegetables and flower beds

in a small garden? How to grow corn, asparagus or other unconventional vegetables on my plot? What materials can I recycle on my plot? For those who are interested in handicrafts there has been training in weaving baskets and hand bags of used materials like foil wrappings.

Rhubarb leaves can be recycled in decorating concrete slabs for the pavement of garden paths. These and several other interesting topics and innovative ideas have been dealt with during the past few years. Every spring there is a meeting where members are invited to socialize by swapping plants and seedlings.



**Environmental Guide for allotment gardeners in Marjaniemi**



# Great-Britain: Update on Statutory Duty Review

Donna McDaid

In April of this year the Government in the UK, created a 'burden list' of all duties placed on Local Authorities. Until now, there has been no comprehensive list of the legal duties placed on councils. To remedy this, the Government agreed with the Local

Government Association (the national body representing councils) that they should compile such a list so that everyone is clear what legal obligations local councils have and check whether the duties are still relevant. The intention of the review was as much about

ensuring that vital duties were retained as it was about removing unnecessary burdens.

We were dismayed to find that Section 23 of the Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 was on the review



list. This is the foundation of the legislation; if removed there would be no safeguard on allotments in England and Wales.

As the National body that represent the allotment movement, we decided that we need to make our voice heard. We contacted all our members, emailed MP's across England and Wales and wrote to Government to express our concerns.

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) replied to us in writing and said "There are no plans to change Section 23 of the Smallholdings and Allotments Act 1908. The review will not remove statutory protections for allotments and there is no intention to remove local authorities' statutory duties to provide allotments or to remove the require-

ment for local authorities to seek the Secretary of State's consent to use statutory allotments for other purposes".

NSALG received numerous responses from MP's. The Rt Hon Jim Paice MP (Minister of State for Agriculture and Food) said "Department for Environment and Rural Affairs (Defra) is keen to see more growing spaces made available for people to grow their own fruit and vegetables, I recognise that allotments are an important resource in helping us achieve this. The value of allotments in enabling people to grow their own food was underlined in Prime Ministers Questions on 4 May, where the Prime Minister said: "It is extremely important that allotments are made available, it is a great movement and it has my full support".

On 30 June 2011, a summary of the responses and the latest revised list of duties were published. This exercise has successfully enabled a clearer picture of the requirements on local authorities, and created a valuable record that had previously not existed.

There were 222 Statutory Duties placed on the list for review. 6,000 responses were received in total; from that, 2,947 replies were in response to the removal of Section 23 of the Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908. Nearly a 50% response from Allotment holders across the England and Wales! This indicates to us that it was a worthwhile exercise, in letting Government know how we feel about the protection of allotments for future generations.



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*Landscape around Castleton (Great-Britain)*

# The vernacular rural heritage from the past to the future

Graham Fairclough,  
Head of Characterisation English Heritage London

Transfrontier co-operation enables us to share landscapes. Exploring new places, meeting new people and finding new ways of “seeing” are benefits of transfrontier co-operation. They support the aims of the Council of Europe’s European Landscape Convention, and they support the Framework Convention on the value of cultural heritage for society by increasing understanding between countries and

cultures and by contributing to a sharper definition of Europe’s common heritage.

Landscape is one of the most important components of common heritage. It provides a common « language » that arises simply from being human (landscape is an area « as perceived by people ») transcending nationality, race, religion or culture. What, how-

ever, is the “European landscape”? It has been said to me that there can be no « European landscape » because landscape exists in local or national perceptions, and the European scale is simply too big. It is true that we find it easier to recognize specific areas or types of landscape (such as the Perigord or dehesa) than we do with the “European landscape”, but any combination of landscapes in Europe is in



*Farm in Waterloo (Belgium)*

responses to landscape in twelve places in eight countries, using the metaphor of stories to frame different perceptions of landscape.

A still current project (the Culture 2007 Eucaland Project) considers the contribution to Europe's landscape of past and present agricultural activity. It aims to create a provisional European-wide

character distinctively European, not American or African. There is indeed a « European landscape », and trans-frontier co-operation – programmes and projects, workshops and exchanges – is an important way to understand it.

Working across borders extends perceptions and opens up new perspectives. Seeing other landscapes (preferably in the company of those who “own” them) causes a “European” view of landscape to emerge. Furthermore, seeing our own landscapes, through the eyes of colleagues and friends from other countries revises our perceptions even of familiar areas, whilst having crossed a frontier we can look back from “the other side” and re-imagine our own landscape.

It is often possible to see strong differences between landscapes with similar topography or climate but divided by political frontiers, thus demonstrating the role of culture in shaping landscape. The relevance of national frontiers to landscape, however, is challenged by noting that all Europe's national frontiers are “young” in relation to the deep “time-depth” of the landscapes that cross them. “Local” differences born of the spirit of a place are important, but comparing areas across borders reveals deeper pan-

European similarities that arise from cultural fundamentals such as types of agriculture, social structures and long-term historical functional processes.

Over recent years, I have been fortunate to have participated in several transfrontier (or pan-European) projects. As a result, “my” European landscape is becoming a diverse collection of images, memories and interpretations, a collage of Europe, an ever-changing kaleidoscope which speaks increasingly consistently to me of “Europe”.

The Meetings of the workshops for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention organized by the Council of Europe with various countries are a good example of this, allowing participants not only to see new landscapes but to discuss what they mean to both residents and visitors. More specifically, a recent Cost action (A27 ; Landmarks) led to many examples of transfrontier comparison, including exchange visits, joint projects (e.g. between Greece and Iceland) and a published overview of how “landscape” is conceptualized, researched, managed and protected in thirteen different countries. An earlier project, European Pathways to the Cultural Landscape in the culture 2000 programme, compared landscape and

classification of agricultural landscape so that a “reading” of the landscape on a European scale will move closer together. Projects such as this, or the French transfrontier workshops, help us to look beyond the national or local perceptions that have emphasized each country's exceptionalism without also noticing a higher commonality. Any area of landscape can have both local and transnational values.

Transfrontier work rises above and transcends borders of all kinds. It reveals what “landscape as common heritage” might mean, and it introduces an enlarged common perspective and understanding of the mechanics of landscape management. In return, landscape offers a fertile area of research and action for transfrontier co-operation. There have been many successful transfrontier or pan-European landscape-based projects ..., but the next few years – thanks to European Union programmes funded by Esf-Cost, FP7, Culture 2007 or Era-net – are likely to offer many more opportunities for using transfrontier co-operation to see landscape at European as well as local or national level.

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*Landscape in Norway*

# Nordic multilateral co-operation on landscape

Jerker Moström, Audun Moflag, Sören Rasmussen, Ragnheiður  
Pórarinsdóttir Sêrfræðingur, Satu Mikkonen-Hirvonen

## **The Nordic context – a vast space**

The Nordic region is among the most sparsely populated in Europe. Its 25 million people are just enough to cover the territory with some 21 people per square kilometer. The vast share of landscape per capita is a trait shared by most of the northern counties and it is both an asset and a challenge in terms of planning, management, and the protection of landscapes.

The concept of vast spaces and desolation is an important part of the branding of the Nordic landscape.

The advertising business and the tourist industry are carefully cultivating the exotic images of true wilderness, vast forests, archipelagos and the Nordic light, fully aware of the economic potential. But vast space also has obvious drawbacks.

A truly un-exotic fact is that many countryside municipalities are facing a situation with a rapidly decreasing population.

This may not be an exclusive Nordic trend, but taking into account the insignificant number of residents housed by these municipalities, the challenge is striking.



### *Landscape in Denmark*

#### **A long tradition of multilateral co-operation**

The Nordic countries are joined together by their common history, culture and, to a great extent, similarity of languages. The first political union dates back to 1397-1523. In recent history, the Nordic countries have been working closely together on political issues for the last 50 years. This forms a basis also for a joint Nordic approach to landscape challenges.

The Nordic Council was established in 1952. It is a forum for parliamentary co-operation between Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, and the autonomous territories of Greenland, the Faroe Islands and Åland. Initial successes in the 1950s include the passport union, the common labour market and social policy conventions.

The Nordic Council of Ministers, established in 1971, is a forum for governmental co-operation. Under the Committee of Senior Officials for Environmental Affairs (EK-M), the Working group for nature, open air and cultural environment (NFK) is dealing with a broad spectrum of themes – including biological diversity, landscape, cultural environment and outdoor recreation. In the area of landscape and cultural environment, the working group is supporting joint Nordic proposals for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention. Through the facilitating work of the Nordic Council of Ministers, Nordic co-operation on landscape issues has a strong multilateral approach.

#### **Intergovernmental actions**

The national bodies responsible for the European Landscape Convention

are co-operating within the framework of the Nordic Council of Ministers. The Nordic Council of Ministers' Environmental Action Plan 2005-08 identified the implementation of the European Landscape Convention as a priority area of action. The NFK Working group has supported a series of important initiatives:

- A preliminary project on the follow-up to the European Landscape Convention, presenting information on the work on landscape in the Nordic countries, and identifying common priorities for co-operation in implementing the Convention. The work is presented in the report: Nordens landskap (76 pages in Norwegian). TemaNord 2003 :550.
- A Nordic workshop, exchanging views on implementing the



*Landscape in Sweden*

European Landscape Convention by municipal and regional planning, and establishing a Nordic network of people involved in these issues (Norway, September 2004). The work is presented in the report: Implementering av den europeiske landskapskonvensjonen i lokal og regional planlegging i Norden (55 pages in Norwegian). ANP 2005 : 771.

- A Nordic workshop, consolidating the network for Nordic co-operation on landscape and cultural environment, and improving the basis for joint Nordic projects (September 2007, Sweden). Report:: Landskap i förändring (74 pages in Swedish). TemaNord 2008 :581.

In addition to these initiatives the Nordic Council of Ministers has supported a number of joint projects within the areas of natural conservation and cultural heritage with strong relevance to landscape.

#### **Opportunities ahead**

Within current Nordic co-operation, the need for more concrete action has been raised. The co-operation should in particular focus on political aspects and options related to the implementation of the European Landscape Convention, and strengthen links between the management of natural and cultural heritage, recognizing them as resources of mutual enrichment.

#### **Three initial steps may explore the opportunities :**

- The Convention gives new meaning to our notion of landscapes. Awareness raising is the key to implementation. Everybody in relevant planning or decision-making positions should recognise the nature of landscapes (according to the Convention definition), what they mean to human quality of life and what kind of forces are changing them.
- The institutional frameworks for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention differ slight-

ly between the Nordic countries. There should be a project looking into the division of responsibilities in each country, the authorities involved and the processes organised at central government level for ratification and implementation. The aim is to create a better overview in order to facilitate co-operation

- The Nordic countries should adopt a common Nordic action programme for landscape. The co-operation should draw on each country's particular expertise in different areas, and promote a Nordic perspective in national contexts.

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