

Trade mark fruit and vegetables: why an allotment relieves the family budget

Already 200 years ago allotments fulfilled the dream, even of those less privileged, to get their own piece of green: often modest, but always of an inestimable value. Since its creation the allotment is characterized above all by the cultivation of fruit and vegetables; rest and stay in the fresh air were always inclusive.

Whereas in the past maximum yields were the goal of the allotment gardeners, today the focus is on the quality of the food produced. Home grown fruit and vegetables have the aura of something special in our consumer and scandal society, because those who really want to harvest healthy food have to work ecologically and sustainably. For modern young city dwellers the allotment has meanwhile become an element of urban lifestyle. For low income households, it makes organic quality food affordable. Therefore a well managed allotment still in the 21st century contributes to the self-sufficiency of food and continues to comply with its definition: it serves the cultivation of fruit and vegetables for the allotment gardener's own use. As allotments are almost exclusively cultivated in an organic way, cultivation inevitably leads to seasonal and regional enjoyment of products home grown and supports sustainable consumption. Cleverly planned, it relieves every household budget in a noticeable way.



The BDG working group on specialist gardening advice took stock for the first time in a concept study. The harvest of fruit, vegetables and herbs was examined on a 321 square meters large organically managed allotment plot in Leverkusen. The virtual financial return was more than 1,120 Euro. After deduction of the management expenses, the allotment garden achieved a result of 710 Euro. For a family on a tight budget, this amount can make a big difference while finding out how much social participation is possible.

In this calculation the recreational use remained explicitly unconsidered, because the recreational use is considered by the German allotment garden law as part of the gardening use. A financial assessment of this recreational use would significantly increase the yield of an allotment.

The positive contribution of an allotment to the household budget is even clearer when you consider celebrations, which could often not be organised by a family



in his small apartment: just by organising a single enrolment party with about 20 guests in an allotment you easily save a few hundred Euro compared to this organisation in a restaurant or coffee house. Even without food and drinks the recreation in the green is not free of costs: In Berlin the annual ticket of the State owned “Grün Berlin GmbH” for a family with three children costs 105 Euro. This is the only way to gain access to all well kept gardens and parks in Berlin. In the allotment association, however, everything is inclusive: parties and events, good advice from the associative specialist gardening adviser and above all the stay in the green. Allotments offer recreation in a green area to all citizens and at the same time

make a positive contribution to the family budget. More data and information under:

www.kleingarten-bund.de/de/bundesverband/positionspapiere/kleingarten-familienbudget/

Thomas Wagner, scientific member of the German allotment garden federation

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The positive contribution of an allotment to the family budget was already acknowledged at the occasion of the congress of the International Office du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux in Brussels in 1999 on basis of a comparison made and confirmed by several analyses in other countries. The recent analysis by the BDG confirms these data once more.