

## Federal competition: „Gardens in urban development 2018

You certainly read the article “trade mark: fruit and vegetables: why an allotment relieves the family budget”. Allotments, however, offer much more.

A journey through the colourful world of allotments proves this without any doubt

20 allotment garden associations, 15 federal states, 12 days, 7 jury members, one bus: The jury trip for the federal competition gardens in urban development 2018 is done. The next step is: the evaluation – and distribution of medals and price money. How important the inspection is for the competition, was also again clearly proved in 2018. As the colourful gardens can only show and impress the visitors on site by the exemplary commitment of the gardeners and the special interaction between gardens and local communities.

### Allotments are quality of life

Gardening is stuffy? Are you kidding? You find people gardening all over Germany, across generational and cultural boundaries. Especially for town dwellers allotments are an oasis that offers recreation, contacts with nature and nature experiences. The great value of the small gardens is fortunately recognized by many municipalities and so they promote them as part of the green infrastructure.



### The garden is buzzing



Perfectly trimmed and sterile allotments have already been a cliché for a long time. Instead, it is humming and buzzing everywhere. Thus, bees are kept in 19 of the 20 associations visited. This helps the gardeners to a better harvest and provides the people with rich fruit all season long. With the variety of pollen and nectar donators

in the allotment, the typical agricultural land can no more compete. It is a win-win situation for gardeners and bees, because there is honey for both.

### **Nature instead of an enormous use of chemicals**

The younger gardeners have learned again that gardens are part of nature. The times of determined wars against cabbage white, Colorado beetles and co. are over. Instead the gardeners rely on a peaceful coexistence. Herbicides, antifungal agents and chemical synthetic means against pests are no longer used. Gardeners prefer a season without apples or cabbage – next year the harvest will be better.



### **New gardeners –new values**

However, the new gardening has little to do with “Laissez-Faire”. In the gardens the simple life is sought – and humility rediscovered. Respect towards nature and patience are the most important skills. For all the other questions gardening advisers help the newcomers on site. Even if the gardeners look for recreation in the garden, the new generations do no more shut themselves off, but on the contrary the new generation comes with a lot of will to self-organisation and responsibility and so adapts easily to the associative life. Thus, the allotment garden is slowly handed over to a new generation – and its survival is so secured.

*Thomas Wagner, scientific staff member of the BDG*