

Allotment garden congress in Dresden

The Study: “allotment gardens are changing” proves that allotments are in greater demand than ever

Sandra von Rekowski, German allotment federation

For towns and communes, allotment gardens are a real asset and are becoming increasingly popular. These findings are underlined by the results of the study “allotments are changing” which was partially published by the federal institute for buildings, urban and spatial research (BBSR) on 2nd May 2019. This study was officially presented during the congress of the German allotment federation in Dresden on September 7th, 2019.

Allotments, as an indispensable part of the green infrastructure in Germany, have a great positive effect on their environment and offer the possibility of meaningful leisure time activities in nature. In the midst of densely packed areas, they provide more greenery in our cities.

The study results prove that allotments are in such high demand, especially in prosperous conurbations, that there are sometimes waiting times of several years. In Germany, there are just less than one million allotments, in which approximately five million people are gardening. This stock has to be expanded by the creation of new sites as well as by modernisation and further compaction in areas where there are requirements for more allotments. In



sparsely populated regions with a population decline, the allotment associations often face the opposite problem. The further development of allotment areas, based on the existing needs, has, therefore, to actively meet both challenges. On the one hand structure adjustments are required in order to meet the pressure of demands in cities, while on the other hand, solutions for the consequences of demographic change are necessary in structurally weak regions.

With a view to new target groups and thus to new challenges, the study underlines that many associations are already working with innovative

approaches. Modernisation and change based on the federal allotment law (BKleinG) are, therefore, considered by many associations as an opportunity for a stable future development. The open design of the allotment sites creates ecologically valuable links with the urban open space system as well as places for recreation and deceleration - even for residents without an own plot. Allotments are also important meeting places for different cultures, social milieus and generations. Allotment gardeners actively support environmental education and do not just stay among themselves. Also neighbours, children and young people of adjacent care and educational institutions benefit from the knowledge and commitment of the allotment gardeners. Finally, allotments support urban spaces as important refuges for rare plant and animal species. In order to promote the development of allotment gardening as an important green infrastructure in a sustainable and need - orientated manner, the German allotment federation is committed to insuring that allotments are explicitly taken into consideration in infrastructure and subsidy programmes. Thus all responsible actors have to act together: Federations of allotment gardeners, green area offices, urban planners and politicians must develop strategies and concepts and together submit them for discussion.

All this is not only an absolute necessity for the BDG in Germany, but for all allotment federations throughout Europe.