

In 2020 the International Office awarded again diplomas for associations active in the ecological or social area or having undertaken innovative activities.

During its statutory meeting in Luxembourg in March, it was decided to respond positively to the requests for five ecological diplomas, three innovative diplomas and one social diploma.

These diplomas should have been remitted during the study session in Helsinki, which had, however, to be cancelled due to the Covid-19 crisis.

Now the diplomas will be remitted on national level at an appropriate occasion.

You find below a first short description of the Swedish projects. A more detailed information will follow in the next Hyphens.

The allotment association Falan in Falun received the diploma for ecological gardening

The programme started about 20 years ago and so far only 5 associations have managed to reach gold level.

Falan was awarded gold in the Swedish Allotment Federation's environmental programme in May 2018. Some examples of what they do and have created

- They practise ecological gardening. In their newsletter they inform their members continually about sustainable and environmentally smart ways to garden and how to promote biodiversity.
- They cooperate with other non-profit organisations.
- A meadow that they cut by scythe on the association's common land.
- Hotels for insects and beehives.
- Water for irrigation is collected from a nearby pond and members are only allowed to water their gardens in the mornings and evenings to minimise the waste of water.



The allotment association Linnea in Stockholm received the diploma for ecological gardening

The Swedish Allotment Federation's environment diploma programme started about 20 years ago and so far only 5 associations have managed to reach gold level.

The allotment association Linnea have been working for many years with many different activities/actions to finally reach gold level in 2019.

As well as gardening in an ecological way, Linnea has for many years put a lot of effort and work into increasing the biodiversity on their land:

- They so have created a bee group.
- A meadow was recently created on their common land.
- The association made an inventory of "historical" plants.
- They have arranged workshops for members to build various types of homes for insects.
- A bee-friendly border has been planted.

In spring the association makes an organised purchase of manure, soil, sand and gravel for the association and its members.



Långholmen Allotment Association in Stockholm received the Office diploma for ecological gardening

The Swedish Allotment Federation's environment diploma programme started about 20 years ago.

Långholmen's Allotment Association was awarded gold in the Swedish Allotment Federation's environmental programme in May 2017. Among the things they have done you find:

- A border for growing and keeping "historical" plants
- Several beehives and birdhouses
- Seawater is used for all irrigation
- All members have their own composts. Education about composting is available to all members. They also have a common latrine compost.
- Coarser materials, like branches and sticks, are shredded on site.
- The association makes a yearly organised purchase of manure and soil.





The association Älvtomt allotment association in Örebro received the Office diploma for innovative projects

Älvtomt has always worked to keep the original houses, plants, values etc, but has also kept an eye towards the future and all its challenges, such as the environment, accessibility etc.

Between 2006 and 2013 they made the association accessible for the elderly and people in wheelchairs. The first thing they did was to dig out and remove all the loose, coarse gravel on all the paths, and replacing it with rock flour. When this was done, they built ramps making club house, dance-floor and all areas within the association accessible to all. Finally, they built a new service building with a toilet and a shower adapted to accommodate wheelchairs. As an extra plus they prepared the new service building so they can switch to using solar panels for energy in the future.

In 1917, when the Älvtomt allotment association was created, the city of Örebro donated an apple tree, a cherry tree and a pear tree to each plot. In 2011 a group started to make an inventory of the trees that still remained of these original trees. The main goal was to keep the trees and to make sure none of these trees were removed without informing the board.

Finally, with their centennial birthday coming up in 2017, they turned the old, no longer used service building into an allotment museum.



The association Orten odlar in Stockholm received the diploma for innovative projects

These allotment gardeners focus on the importance of allotments

- as meeting places and places for social exchange
- as a place for relaxation
- as a source of inspiration for gardeners
- as a place for biodiversity
- as an added value for society

and put forward following requests:

- Creation of more allotment areas
- Protection of the existing allotment areas (by law)
- Financial support from cities for allotment areas.

The project resulted from a collaboration between the network Pepper & Pumpkin, the art hall in Tensta, the Studieförbundet (organisation for adult education) and 12 allotment associations in Järva.

Some of their activities:

- A seed exchange in spring
- Participation in the political week in Järva (a big event where all political parties and their leaders participate)
- A garden festival located in the centre of Järva, open allotment areas, market and stage with short lectures etc.

During the festival day, the visitors could listen to short lectures about soil, compost and could also get advice from experts in organic gardening.

The whole day shuttle buses took the festival visitors to three allotment associations in Järva.

They had the opportunity to meet Zita, our master gardener, who every week reports how much she has harvested on her allotment having a size of 100 square metres.

The result of her project: From April 1st – November 24th 2019 she harvested 870 kilo vegetables on her organic plot (100 square metres). It shows the potential of an allotment. It must be the most productive kitchen garden in Sweden.





A detailed description will follow in the next Hyphens

The four other projects from Finland, Luxembourg and the Netherlands will be presented later.