

Allotment gardens

Areas of experience for children



Office International
du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux

PREFACE

*I*t is a very special pleasure to congratulate the Office International du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux for editing the brochure "Areas of experience for children".

*L*ike the Office International, we believe that allotment gardens are a perfect means to enhance both the aesthetic and the social quality of our lives. In addition they contribute to the improvement of our natural environment.

Octavie MODERT
State Secretary, Ministry for Agriculture,
Viticulture and Rural Development

*W*e are convinced that the activities in the allotment gardens, where people of different generations cohabitate, can teach children a respectful and tolerant behavior towards mankind and nature. The gardens provide them areas of discovery, giving them the essential motivation for their personal, psychological and physic development.

*W*e would like to congratulate your association on the publishing of this brochure, and we are convinced that it will not fail to have a beneficial influence on the education of our youth, in which future we strongly believe.

Fernand BODEN
Minister for Agriculture,
Viticulture and Rural Development



Octavie MODERT



Fernand BODEN



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CONGRATULATIONS

*I*t is with great pleasure that I am writing this foreword to the brochure "Allotment gardens – a place of discovery". I share the ambitions of the Office International du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux. Spaces around the family houses, in our towns and around our cities are precious treasures: growing delicious vegetables, harvesting tasteful fruit, cultivating flowers with many scents and colors, a space to play, to rest under venerable trees, a place to meet and help each other...

*T*he heritage past generations are passing on to us offers multiple possibilities when it comes to the appropriate management of family budget or the concern for healthy food, the protection of the environ-

ment, the embellishment of our cities, the participation in social life, handicrafts or simply leisure time to relax in nature.

I can only welcome and encourage the initiative of the International Office to pass on the lead to the young generations, to have children (re) discover allotment gardens, the miracles to be observed, the adventures to be lived and the discoveries to be made there.

*T*o make this a success, it will frequently be necessary to use the knowledge and know-how of our grand parents, who with talent and assiduity knew how to cultivate the art of gardening. They will be able thanks to their privileged relationship

with the children to pass on their knowledge, their experience, their patience and their pleasure to cultivate the garden to them.

*M*y special thanks go to the authors and photographers of this beautiful book and I would like to wish much success to the editors.

Marie-Josée JACOBS
Minister of Family
and Integration



Marie-Josée JACOBS



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Congratulations

It is with great joy that I have taken and read this issue. It reflects the very humanity, which is also advocated by the Council of Europe. Yet, what do allotment gardens and the Council of Europe have in common? Quite a lot, as democracy and human rights, which the Council of Europe has been defending with its 46 member states for 55 years now are not lived and taught in an empty space but there where people meet. Thus, in cities and their densely populated areas, in schools and in allotment gardens.

We, the 400 international non-governmental organizations, of which the Office International du Coin de Terre et des

Jardins Familiaux a.s.b.l., are one of the five bases of the Council of Europe together with the Parliamentary Assembly, the Committee of Ministers, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and the European Court for Human Rights. It is our task to make sure that experiences, suggestions and hopes of citizens influence the political decisions at the highest level so that what children are planting in the allotment gardens bears its fruit in the meeting rooms.

What makes your activities with children and adolescents particularly valuable is that you are doing it to allow children to become free human beings and not

for "prevention purposes". You allow them to experience and learn about nature and to evolve together with other people. An experience, that shows, that be it alone or together, one can contribute to growth, will have an impact on their entire life. And this is future.

Anneliese OESCHGER
President of the Liaison Committee
of non-governmental organizations of
the Council of Europe



Anneliese OESCHGER



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LEISURE GARDENS: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR CHILDREN

While encouraging sustainable development we work for our children; but in their own interest, it is important that they participate in this effort from an early age on.

For this purpose, leisure gardens are a perfect means.

Therefore, the Office International du Coin de Terre & des Jardins Familiaux decided to discuss that topic during its study session held on 17th, 18th and 19th June 2004 in Warsaw and this brochure was written on that occasion.

Our common goal is to offer young people a suitable place in the "garden of the family" which family, however, is only complete once it covers at least three generations.

In the name of this family, adults have to guarantee the "living and feeding". Gardening may fulfill this objective; children are not responsible for managing the garden, but have to play their part according to their age, thus learning new skills.

With regard to the relationship between the leisure gardens and children, two concepts are possible:

-either the garden is mainly used for playing and leisure time,

-or the garden is mainly used for educational purposes.

Both concepts are based on the playing aspect of gardening. Nevertheless, I would like to point out particularly the educational aspect, which might be less known and more complicated. We therefore want to encourage the initiatory and educational aspect of gardening in close relation to the school system in which it is integrated.



The garden: a place where children play and learn



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Leisure gardens: an opportunity for children

Encouraging children who grow up in cities for gardening work means enabling them to discover the world of living species, to learn about life and take part in its creation. Thus, they are not passive when dealing with green areas, as they have contributed to set them up.

At the same time, children learn how to be patient and develop a sense for work and continuity because plants need care during their entire life.

By taking part in gardening activities, they also learn to respect other people, the environment and nature, as being basic values of education.

Leisure gardens are therefore an opportunity for children. Many activities are carried out in all countries that are a member of the Office International du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux; a reason for which they wanted to collect their experience in a largely distributed brochure.

Thanks to the experience of 15 of our national federations, this work will hopefully attract the attention of public administrations and other competent authorities, and lead to their necessary support in order to create and develop leisure gardens.

Bruno RAJAUD
President of the Office International
du Coin de Terre et
des Jardins Familiaux



Bruno RAJAUD



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The allotment and leisure gardens – spaces of discovery for children

If we look back at the years following the end of the war we remember that in the cities there were many hidden places and open areas where children could have direct contact with an untouched nature. There was as well enough space where children could give free way to their fantasy and experience nature.

This adventure grounds have disappeared due to the spreading of the communes, the density of the housing developments and the efforts to plan completely all the open country.

The allotment and leisure gardens represent now for our children a compensation for this lost paradise. In the allotment gardens

they can have direct contact with nature and discover the numerous mysteries of plants and animals. In this way they can watch the ripening of fruit and vegetables and see the miracles of nature.

Today the ecological conscience of our children is much more developed than our's in the past and the allotment gardens offer a practical area to get active that can not be found elsewhere.

In the allotment gardens children also learn to know the rules of living together among children of their age.

It has not to be forgotten that here they learn some manual skills by playing, which are very important

for their personal development.

This brochure aims to motivate us into safeguarding and paying more attention to these adventure grounds in our gardens for our children. Because the children of today who spend a happy time in the allotment and leisure gardens will be the leisure gardeners of tomorrow.

Wilhelm WOHATSCHEK
president of the executive board



Wilhelm WOHATSCHEK



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The allotment and leisure gardens – spaces of discovery for children

The Council of Europe has found out that of the 800 million people living in its member states, 160 million are children under 18, half to three quarters of which are living in urban areas in our industrialized countries.

The consequences of industrialization on the structure of our family and society as well as on the urban outlook are well known to all of us,

Yet, what are the impacts of this industrialization and urbanization for our children and adolescents?

From the children and adolescents' point of view, what are the elements that make a residential area a "good" residential area to grow up in?

Much was said and written over the past years regarding the social function and the environment protection role of the allotment garden movement. The aspect "children and allotment gardens", however, was no longer directly dealt with despite the fact that today's children will be governing the world tomorrow and that they will be taking our place in the associations in order for them not to disappear. The aim of this brochure is to fill this gap.

Since 1961 children's rights are anchored in the today revised version of the social Charta of the Council of Europe and since 1989

in a Convention of the United Nations. These texts are based on the principle of the "superior interest of the child".

The interpretation of these conventions is based on three key rules:

- The right of children for protection, i.e. abuse and criminality
- The right for specific advantages and services: i.e. education, social security
- The right to participate in social life: by their own activities and listening to their needs

Even though these texts directly address the member states, we may not, as a movement with social character, remain inactive observers.

Does the allotment garden have some positive impact on children? And if yes, what would this be and how can this be achieved?

This brochure is meant to provide an answer to this question. It is clearly underlining that allotment gardens are areas of discovering for children and contribute to their identification, make them become respectful with regard to human beings and nature, make them aware of generation, growth and death in the garden thus teaching them about life, make

them aware of the meaning of words like democracy, solidarity and tolerance through life in community and protect them from many dangers of the city life.

The French poet Jean de la Fontaine made a dying farmer say to his children, whom he wanted to stimulate to cultivate the land and leaving them a plot of land "there is a treasure hidden in it".

If after reading this brochure, all readers agree that putting at the disposal an allotment garden is a treasure for adults and children alike and if this value can be communicated in a convincing way, the brochure "allotment gardens, areas of experiences for children" has reached its aim, which is all I could hope.

Malou WEIRICH
Secretary general of the Office
International du Coin de Terre et des
Jardins Familiaux



Malou WEIRICH



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CHILDREN

Children

.... are movement
 need visual supervision
 are active, thinking and acting human beings
 may leave their own visual and sound marks
 have the right to make their own experiences
 may be unexpected
 are not small adults
 are children!

and

.... need adults, who are defending an environment, in which children have an important part to play



Young children have great fun in the garden



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Preface: Children are our future...

Children are our future...

Therefore we should do all our possible to create areas for them in which they can evolve and develop in a positive way. Our allotment gardens are such areas of experience. Children can discover and learn about nature, they can feel secure in a natural environment. They can satisfy their curiosity and pleasure of adventure. Contact with nature is a primary condition for the good psychological development of a child.

Thus, while playing children may learn about the secrets of nature and get to know the relations which exist between humans and nature. This is necessary for the emotional and social development of a child.

Satisfying these fundamental needs of children is not only a task of the State but of the entire society. A task to which we, as allotment gardeners are also contributing.

Allotment gardens offer spaces with many possibilities to learn and discover, favouring the development of children and preparing them for their future life as adults. Most of the parents who are active in our allotment gardens are aware of this positive influence of the garden on the harmonious development of a child. It is therefore important to extend this awareness to other mothers and fathers, which is also the object of the present publication.



Nature's mysteries



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Introduction

Plays and games of children and allotment gardens go together since the creation of allotment gardens. Even more, the latter have appeared with the implementation of playgrounds for children to which garden plots were added. This eventually lead to the creation of "workers' gardens" synonymous of allotment gardens. Thus, and until now, allotment gardens and children still go together.

Even today, children of allotment gardeners are involved in the evolution of the garden and this not only regarding growth and development of nature in this garden, with

all the positive impacts on the evolution of a child but also in the social life of the community of allotment gardeners, thus of the association.

In general, children participate in all associative events during the year: during garden feasts, they parade through the allotment and leisure garden site with decorated toy vehicles or take part in various games. A culminating event is certainly the visit of Santa Clause at the end of the year, which many of them still expect with some apprehension. Special proposals for specific events are also very popular with children.

As shown by the examples in this brochure, there are many more possibilities in addition to the usual activities for our children. It is most important to open our allotment gardens and allotment and leisure garden sites to children in the Kindergarten and primary school as areas of adventure with a diversified and precious pedagogical value.



Some plants are beautiful and smell nicely



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Allotment garden as catalyst for communication

In general the allotment garden is used by the entire family, thus including the simultaneous presence from family members of different generations. This will also be the case if families do not live in the same house. The allotment garden therefore frequently is the only place, where generations will communicate with each other.

Communication within the household has a tendency to disappear as computers, television and video games give the subjective impression of communication but actually lead to increased isolation of the individual. The garden thus, is the ideal place to meet and exchange ideas for the entire family. Even though discussions in the garden will necessary center around the work in the garden, it is the exchange of experience of any kind, which is truly important. The garden offers an ideal place to become aware about the needs of others, their concerns and problems but also to share their successes and joys.

The allotment gardener however needs to find a way to attract the younger generation into the garden. Promising garden work is definitely not appropriate, but the use of the gazebo as a cool place to organize a party will be a message quite easily understood. Both sides therefore need to make an effort.



A meeting place for all generations



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Working in the garden reduces aggressions

Recently many shocking reports on the aggressive behavior of adolescents have increased concerns among the population. Reports regarding mistreatment of pupils have made the public aware about the growing problem of violence among adolescents. There are of course no figures as to what extent children from allotment gardeners are involved. It is yet sure that providing young people with an outdoor occupation, as for instance working in the garden, can significantly

contribute to reduce aggressions. The garden is, in this case, also an excellent means of socialization.

Adolescents may not be expected to work in the garden on their own initiative. Yet, if young children can establish a relationship with the garden through their family, this can have a positive impact on their teenager life. Children, who have had an experience in nature, will be less inclined to become violent

towards other people or objects. Observing how plants evolve and grow in the allotment garden shows that building makes more sense than harm and destruction, that planting and harvesting is more sensitive than spraying graffiti. The garden may thus become a more or less conscientious means to promote respect of fellow citizens.



Gardening together is a marvellous way...



...of learning how to behave in society



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Possibilities to learn about nature

Being in nature in the middle of a city – what other place is more appropriate than allotment and leisure garden sites?

The land on which the allotment and leisure garden site is located is a protected area on which children may freely move – they can play, squabble with other children away from the road traffic.

Yet, there is always something happening in the garden. Everything is moving and changing with the seasons and children love everything that is changing around

them. They like to touch, observe, smell, taste and use. They learn about the life of plants and animals, they observe insects, bees and butterflies and everything that is moving on the ground and in the air.

Thus, children can learn, while playing, about nature and how to organize their leisure time in the exterior. These children have also, later on in their adult life, a different attitude towards the environment, plants and animals as those children who discovered the world mostly through television and computer.

Allotment gardens offer areas where children can discover nature while playing and having fun.

Therefore: Preference given to families with children!



Through games...



...children learn how to respect nature



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Sensorial experience

Children discover their environment with all their senses – smelling, tasting, touching, hearing and listening.

Already young children like to discover the various scents of plants, the smell of wood and of freshly cut grass, to blow a dandelion and watch the seeds carried away by the wind.

Using their hands to put plants in the ground is a sensorial experience that all children will enjoy. Watering too is particularly interesting. Water from the rainwater container will be used herefore.

Eating berries and fruit from the garden is a truly pleasant experience even more so if this fruit is the result of the children's own work.

Observing birds, insects, frogs, ants, woodlouses and worms in their environment allows children to discover and get to know their environment.



All their senses are needed...



...to appreciate the fruit of their own work



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Leave a corner in the garden to the children so they can make their own experiences

Leave a corner in the garden to the children so they can make their own experiences

Children want to act and not only be the assistant of adults. Allocating them a small part in the garden allows them to dig, plant and water plants, to grow flowers and vegetables while discovering the life of worms, ladybirds and fleas. They experience the garden "live", and collect souvenirs of the summer sun and hands full of mud which will accompany them during their entire life.

Children are impatient and want to rapidly see results. Fast growing plants as tagetes can satisfy these expectations.

Radish and watercress are also appropriate. As to vegetables, it is important to make the right choice. Children love fresh carrots, juicy tomatoes and sweet corn, thus vegetables they can eat directly in the garden.

Children can follow how "their" plants develop to become fruit and flowers and find themselves marvelling at a sunflower, which has grown more than one meter high.

Leave a corner of the garden to your children and only intervene if it is really necessary.



Work on the children's plot...



...an experience they'll never forget



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Creativity in the allotment garden

*I*n their plays and games, children look for generosity, multiplicity and fantasy.

*N*o toy however refined it may be will replace the experience children can make with natural material such as wood, plants, animals and natural elements.

*B*uilding a heap with wood, leaves and branches is an adventure especially if this heap is rapidly attracting all kinds of animals as hedgehogs and lizards.

*N*esting houses for birds, which they have made themselves, offer a place to birds where they can make their nest. "Insect hostels" are also much appreciated. Made out of wood they rapidly attract solitary insects.

*F*rom the collection to the drying of leaves for decorations and gifts made out of branches, bark and stones, the garden offers many possibilities.



Natural materials from the garden...



...turned into artistic creations



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“Be your own gardener”

Holiday activities in the allotment garden.

To our great surprise, many children wanted to work in the garden during the month of July and August.

This is why the association of allotment gardeners “Waidesgrund” together with the youth department has put at the disposal an allotment garden which is currently not used. Some allotment gardeners offered to help the children as only a few of them had already worked in a garden.

They got to work in small groups and it is with great enthusiasm that the children have prepared the ground to then plant and water their seeds. Another group has planted tomatoes and peppers or would “cut” rhubarb, while others again have “cleaned” the various current bushes and prevented the cherries from falling on the ground.

These activities took place once a week during the holidays and the number of young gardeners always remained constant. Some harvesting could take place already on the last days of the holiday period.

Radish grown in the own garden had a quite different taste with bread and butter as the one from the super-market.

Many children came back even after the school had started again to visit “their garden” and see the result of their work.

The children also showed great interest in the allotment garden movement, its evolution and importance for society, etc.



Working with enthusiasm...



...for a common harvest



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Allotment gardens for nursery schools

Hurray, we have an allotment garden!

We have an allotment garden, which is located close to our school. The short distance to go there is no hindrance even for the youngest children. In this garden there is a wooden hut with a separate biologic toilet and a small room for gardening tools, benches under a sheltering roof, a pit with a hand pump and a connection to the water supply. The pump allows children to play with and in the water.

There is of course also a large lawn of which one part is used to play and the other to grow flowers.

In our garden we grow strawberries, raspberries, bushes, fruit and herbs. We have built a stonewall behind which children can hide or observe bees collecting the pollen from flowers. They can also observe birds eating the berries from the bushes.

We start early in the spring with the work in our garden and our harvest is quite important. Potatoes and kohlrabi are used in our kitchen. Apples are sold to the children's parents and the money collected is used to buy garden tools, which are appropriate for children.

Once a week, the groups of children take part in a joint breakfast. At the time of the harvest we use our own fruit and vegetables. Most of the time the children would already like to eat what they have planted the day before. We remedy to this by growing plants in the classroom that they can then plant in the garden in the spring.

The children like to be in the garden in any season, whether the sky is blue or grey, whether it is cold or hot (this also allows them to get to know the cycles and interactions existing in nature). Even in the winter and with adequate clothes we can be in the garden at any time.

In our garden, children not only learn how to take care of plants but they can also observe how they grow.

Our garden is very diversified with a self-made hammock, a slide, a sand tub and a tree to climb on which are all much appreciated by the children.

Children can make experiences in many different domains in our garden; they can experiment, relax, find a quite and calm spot to be on their own, play, and leave all freedom to their imagination while building landscapes with water and sand.

In the quite atmosphere of the allotment and leisure garden site, children feel as secure as in the building of the school. They can make friends, intensify relationships or simply enjoy themselves.



Hurrah! We have our own plot.



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Halloween – The night of pumpkins

An ancestral tradition from Ireland comes back to Europe via the United States. This former celebration of Celtic druids and clergymen at the end of the year has evolved to become a sort of thanksgiving for the harvest. Even though we no longer need to hunt the spirits of the dead by candles in pumpkins, stories of ghosts are still appreciated even though Halloween (the word is coming from the English “All Hallows Eve” = the day before All Saints) nowadays is celebrated on the 31st October. The celebration has

lost its occult character to become an excellent occasions to celebrate the harvest, very much to the joy of children and schools.

In many allotment gardens, planting pumpkins is a good opportunity to invite friends to come to the garden. In October the children hollow out the pumpkins and carve faces into them the day before together with their parents, youth groups, classmates and teachers. The day of Halloween, the 31st October, parents organise a parade

with lanterns, a fire to cook potatoes or a feast to celebrate the harvest. It is indeed a nice way to close the gardening season and see bright children's eyes every where.



Halloween: pumpkins from the allotment garden



Competition: decorating pumpkins



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Playgrounds - Grounds of freedom

Children can find everywhere some place to play: in a corner behind the house, on an old broken tree or in the shadow of a bush. A large field offers the same space to play and dream than a well delimited sand tub or any slides, swings and other installations which can normally be found on public playgrounds.

Yet, the space to install this multitude of material may only be found in rare parts of our cities. One of these parts are the allotment

and leisure garden sites. They still offer the necessary space and in general are used accordingly by children.

Children can play with their tricycle, kickboard and other rolling devices away from the danger of road traffic. They can enjoy themselves without restrictions to their imagination either alone or in groups. Bushes and flower fields are preferred areas to play of the youngest among them.

Of course, the "classic" playgrounds frequently present from the beginning on in the allotment and leisure garden sites in building areas also attract many children. These playgrounds have evolved too and are most often now proposing natural elements as water, tubes, old trees, etc in addition to the more traditional installations.



An opportunity for nature oriented games...



...for children of all ages



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Playgrounds close to nature in the allotment gardens

In the allotment gardens children can build huts in the bushes and hedges while making first experiences trying to climb on an old fruit tree.

Old trees, stone blocs or mud holes, the use of natural material offer in all the allotment and leisure garden sites many possibilities and new ways to conceive playgrounds. The imagination of parents and children is necessary as well as many skilled hands to build the desired installations.

Willow is a "building material" which is not complicated to use to conceive playgrounds. A material which was already used by our ancestors as

witness the clay walls and objects made out of willow as well as the willow fences.

Willow cuttings are frequently available for free against some help with the cutting work. Children and youngsters are always enthusiastic about this type of trips into nature with a visible and practical result. A picnic outside with the parents subsequently allows strengthening their integration into the life of the association.

Willow huts or tunnels through which children can ramp on the ground are highly appreciated. They give shelter from the sun and are very nice picknick or rest areas. By observing some fundamen-

tal principles even non-experienced persons can rapidly achieve a "stable construction" with the children. Children can observe the speed with which the new "natural" installation takes shape.

If after some years the hut or tunnel is no longer used for the primary aim, the grown willows add an ecological element to the allotment and leisure garden site and offer a place to find food and shelter to more than 150 types of butterflies, bees and other insects.

Thus, our children can learn about nature and their environment in a protected way while later on they become themselves the protectors and keepers of nature.



nature for rampage...



...or relaxing



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"Bio" education on site

The allotment gardeners associations propose partnerships to school gardens.

For many children and adolescents, the school garden frequently is the first active contact with a garden and sometimes even the first conscious encounter with nature as such.

Sadly enough, schools frequently don't have at their disposal areas on which they can set up a garden in their surroundings. A school garden located in an allotment and leisure garden site can solve this problem while offering other advantages: protection from vandalism,

support and help by experienced advisors and members of the association, maintenance of the garden during the holidays, social integration in the life of the association.

The school garden located in the allotment and leisure garden site is favouring a mutual tolerance between the pupils and the allotment gardeners, which allows the two parties to evolve. Mutual respect and understanding the interest of each other have a positive impact on social behaviour

The school garden stands and falls with the commitment of the teacher. The allotment gardeners association offers its help to train

teachers in this field. Some national associations offer special seminars, which allow teachers to exchange experiences.

When leaving school, training, creating a family and many others needs have priority. It is only much later that some remember the time in the garden, a souvenir which can help to find the way back to nature of the young household and maybe even the school garden could lead in a more or less conscious way some other to become allotment gardeners.



Outdoor biology class...



...learning from nature



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What else can we offer to children and adolescents

Invitations for “biological” walks through the allotment and leisure garden sites are a good alternative biology lesson and offer a significant and enriching diversification of the teaching. In most of the cases, experienced advisors are happy to help the teachers. The use of the allotment and leisure garden sites as “classrooms” offers a welcome change in the daily lessons. If then, pupils can also taste strawberries or apples on such occasions, the lessons will not soon be forgotten.

Drawing competitions on the theme “Draw your dream garden” for children between 6 and 10 years or a photograph competition with “snapshots from the allotment garden” are a great success. They can motivate young people to be interested in the garden and look at it in a more detailed manner. Associations frequently have no difficulties to find sponsors for these competitions. They are proposed to schools and the results are published. A party for the children with barbecue in an allotment and leisure garden site for the entire class as a first prize of the drawing competition or a camera for the photograph competition are considered to be really “cool” highlights.

Possibilities for collaboration between allotment gardeners and youth groups are numerous. The person in charge of these groups only need to ask the allotment gardeners. The imagination of the two parties has no limits: outdoor activities, rally, (quiz and plant memory), everything around the garden, tasting different sorts of fruit and vegetables. In summary everything, which involves the participation of children and nature in allotment and leisure garden sites is possible.



Discovery rally...



...flower quiz



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Small gardeners today - Allotment gardeners tomorrow

The "House of the Happy Kids" is a Potsdam children's home. It is also the aim of allotment gardeners to provide children with a happy daily life. This was the thought behind the Potsdam association drawing up a sponsorship contract with the children's home in question in 1995. These are the achievements of the association: In 1996 the association financed toys. The funds for this were raised at a cake bazaar. The allotment gardeners from Potsdam baked cakes and sold them to the public during an exhibition of the city's allotment garden movement. In 1997 the association financed a small greenhouse, which was erected on the children's home ground. This came along with the necessary garden tools. But who tells us how to use such a greenhouse properly, how to plant which plants where? Why does this have to be done like this and that like that? Who will tell us what to do? were frequently asked questions by both children and teachers.

The association secured an allotment garden expert who is now a regular visitor at the children's home, to answer the questions asked by knowledge thirsty little gardeners. Any repairs or

maintenance jobs are carried out by the allotment gardeners of the neighboring allotment garden.

The second growing season can rely on further material and moral support for the project from the regional association.

Why? Very simple! First of all one can say with certainty that some of the children who have grown their own tomatoes and cucumbers in this children's home will manage their own allotment garden one day. Where does this secure knowledge stem from?

The associations of Mondorf and Ulflingen in Luxembourg or the association "Gartenfreunde Ottakring" in Vienna as well as associations in France and Sweden or associations in the provinces of East Flanders and Limbourg in Belgium have projects on school-gardens or try by other activities to sensitize children for nature and gardening. In Norway the leisure gardeners invite school children to visit their associations and garden sites in order to pass on to these children their love and respect for the garden and nature.

In Great-Britain there are associations who provide a plot on which children can garden.

The Polish leisure gardeners create playgrounds for children on their sites eg. in the region of Bydgoszcz in the 233 leisure garden sites you will find 146 playgrounds. They enable children from less fortunate families to spend holidays in the allotment gardens eg. in the allotment garden site "Dolinaka" in Kozenice or in the allotment gardens in Opole. Also, in the allotment gardens in Kielce Polish children from Ukraina, Bielorrussia and Kasachstan can have a rest. They co-operate with schools in order to sensitize children for the natural cycles and gardening and lay out garden plots as school gardens destined for the use of school children. In the region of Katowice alone such courses were organized in 61 allotment garden sites.

The Dutch allotment areas are necessary public gardens in urban regions, where townfolk can get in contact (again) with nature. Many associations offer the children in the neighborhood a welcome place to play their games, eg. in a recreation-ground.



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"...brings joy and has no limits" - Deutsche Schreberjugend

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Enjoying oneself while giving some meaning to leisure time, this is the objective of many responsible of youth groups of the "Deutschen Schreberjugend" (DSJ). A large choice of activities for children and adolescents allows them to easily find something convenient for the various interests, capacities and fields of predilection. Possibilities range from weekly meetings with singing, games, handicraft and visits to the safeguard of our cultural heritage as for example folkloric dances - or more up to date - modern

dance and jazz dance. Meetings with young people from all around the world show to what extend the activities of the DSJ are without limits or boundaries. Everyone can join.

The association houses in the allotment and leisure garden sites are frequently used as meeting places by the DSJ. In turn, the associations benefit from the presence of the young people who are participating in a very positive way in the organisation of feasts and other events by dance groups. Setting up

children groups in associations may also be the beginning for a new group of the "Deutschen Schreberjugend".

The work of the DSJ with young people and associations of allotment gardeners should be acknowledged.



a pleasant...



...and educational activity (schoolgarden)



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Activities of the leisure gardeners for children and young people in Slovakia

The Slovakian federation organizes following activities for children and young people:

Lay out of playgrounds with swings for children, sand pits, etc. in the leisure garden sites;

Organization of competitions for flower arrangements: the arrangements made are then part of our vegetable, fruit and flower exhibitions;

Creation of youth clubs for young gardeners in our towns and villages. The leisure gardeners teach them how they have to plant, cut and graft trees and how they have to sow flowers and vegetables;

Co-operation with schools: in the playschools children make drawings on how they see the leisure gardens; In autumn organization of competitions on the arrangement of pumpkins for the students;

Edition of a brochure: "Young people in the leisure gardens - for children, young people and young leisure gardeners".



competition in arranging flowers



children's drawings of their plot



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Activities of the leisure gardeners for children and young people in Finland

Sport events

Track and field and children's olympic games.: Running, long jump etc. series for different age groups (under 6, 9, 12 and 15 years of age)

Cross country skiing race
Fishing contest
Tennis tournament

Sports contests are common in several associations all over the country.

Outdoor games are organized for children in connection of events and festivities for adults (midsummer, harvest, open house for the local people living in the neighborhood etc.).

Other activities

Outings and excursions to amusement parks, museums, water parks etc.

Fairy tale hour every Saturday throughout the season (June - August) in the club-house

Theatre club, children and young people rehearse a play and perform it in celebrations of the association.

Children's event once in a season: outdoor games, quizzes, music, barbecue etc.

Christmas parties throughout December for both adults and children: Santa Claus, Christmas carols, Christmas dinner etc.

Last summer Herttoniemi Allotment Garden Association organized a photography course for children. After the course children were given cameras and asked to walk around the allotment garden and take photos of it. Photographs were reviewed by a jury and put on display in the club house and on the internet.

Midsummer celebrations in June with a bonfire, barbecue, outdoor games for both adults and children.

Facilities in use of children: playgrounds, club-houses, swings, sand box, tennis courts

Every issue of the Finnish leisure garden review contains a special article for children.

Activities for the children in the neighborhood

Children's day care centres are invited for a visit in the allotment garden for a barbecue. Children's day care centre organize their own events in the club-houses of the allotment garden associations.

"A day in an allotment garden" event for the children of the local day care centre and their parents with activities like the following:
learning about the plants grown in the allotment; A walk in the surrounding nature, Drawing contest, Outdoor games, Barbeque

Track and field, Cross country skiing race, Fishing contest, Tennis tournament, Outings and excursions, Fairy tale hour Theatre club, Christmas parties, Photography course, club-houses, "A day in an allotment garden"



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Czech allotment gardeners and their work with children and teenagers

Since the creation of the allotment gardens in the twenties of last century, children and teenagers have taken part in the social life in these allotment gardens.

Various sports events and competitions for the identification of plants and flowers are organized for children. They participate with their own products in competitions for the best vegetables and the most beautiful flowers.

After the creation of a national allotment garden federation, allotment garden associations and schools set up clubs for young allotment gardeners who take part in competitions of botanic theory and the identification of wild and garden plants (flowers, vegetables, fruit or decoration trees as well as their seeds and fruit).

These competitions take place on a local and regional level. Since 1984, the national competition of "the young allotment gardener" has been organized in two age categories for the winner of the regional competitions.

The competition on the national level is held at various places in the Czech Republic. Children not only get to know the various landscapes and nature, but also the cultural monuments of their home country. About hundred children between ten and fifteen years old take part in this most important competition every year.

A part from the competition of "the young allotment gardener", a painting competition with the topic "allotment gardens and ecology" is organized every year. On this occasion, more than three thousand art works are submitted (drawings, art design, paintings). The competition is organized for nursery schools, primary schools and unprivileged children.

Since 1995, the magazine "The allotment gardener" has been organizing in every school year the competition "Windows to the nature" to draw children's awareness in a playful way to allotment gardens. Its current edition also includes various questionnaires, cross words and competition games with regard to "the allotment gardener and ecology".

In "helpful tools for children and supervisors" some publications can be found, as for instance: allotment gardeners' basics - questions and answers; A young allotment gardener's diary and encyclopedia for young allotment gardeners and beginners (1st – 6th part). Some promotional material for children is also available such as timetables, bookmarks and writing paper. Various stickers and diplomas not only provide children with gardening knowledge but also make them aware of the protection of the environment and the esthetical importance.

competitions: for the identification of plants and flowers, the best vegetable, the most beautiful flower, "the young allotment gardener", "Window to the nature", "the allotment gardener and ecology"



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Polish allotment gardeners work with children and teenagers

Allotment gardens offer many social activities. Setting up playgrounds, "Jordan" gardens and sports fields have become a tradition. The allotment garden federations organize different workshops for children and teenagers and work together with schools as for instance special schools. Outdoor painting and photographing as well as art competitions are other interesting activities. Many Polish allotment garden federations are currently trying to enthuse children and teenagers for sports. Polish allotment gardeners organize bicycle tours, sports competitions and even a "Kajetany" competition for teenagers in the surroundings of Warsaw.

The federation pays particular attention to disabled children and teenagers who in general welcome very much the federation's initiatives. The allotment garden federation integrates disabled children and teenagers by way of their various garden parties. Many allotment garden federations work closely together with children's and old people's homes providing them with remaining garden products; thus, their collaboration also has a non-material scope. In this sense, the monthly federation's magazine "Działkowiec" took over the patronage of the family children's home. With the help of the editorial department it is also planned to set up a garden for these children. In this context, it is appropriate to mention direct help as the editorial department is looking for sponsors.

Holiday in allotment gardens - organized for children, teenagers and elderly people perfectly reflects the federation's commitment to social politics. The federation is organizing these holidays in collaboration with other social institutions. Many people in the cities cannot afford to go on holiday. They are mainly elderly people, retired persons, pensioners, but also children and teenagers coming from the poorest, lower social classes. The federation also has the necessary technical equipment, i.e. allotment garden houses, where people can get a rest during the day.



open air painting...



...sport competitions



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RESOLUTION

The representatives of the national allotment and leisure gardens federations that met in Warsaw from June 17th till 20th 2004 have discussed the subject "The leisure gardens and children and young people".

They acknowledged:

- that the urban areas and their anonymity constitute many dangers for children and young people,
- that playgrounds and open spaces are particularly lacking in the urban areas,
- that often the lacking quality of life in the residential areas does not allow an adequate development and a stimulating education of children and young people for life,
- that the residential areas densely built do not allow any contact with nature and cut young people from their natural roots.

They underline:

- that children are our precious good and the future of our society,
- that children need a place to play and to let steam off,
- that the leisure gardens are healthy areas of discovery for children and young people and stimulate their physical and spiritual development,
- that they show them the happenings in nature from their origin till their end and give so to children and young people an education for life and develop additionally their knowledge for nature and environment,
- that they enable children and young people to be themselves creative and protect them additionally from many urban dangers,
- that they simulate children and young people for a respectful behaviour towards other people and make them understand the notions of democracy, tolerance and solidarity through their participation in the associative life,
- that the associative life in the gardens favours the dialogue between generations in a sustainable way.



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RESOLUTION

They ask therefore their members:

- to continue to take the necessary measures so that children and young people have sufficient space in the leisure garden sites for their individual fruitful leisure time occupation,
- to lay out their gardens in such a way that young people can live a healthy leisure time amidst adults,
- to allow both that children and young people take in an adequate way part in the associative life and develop their own activities,
- to equip the leisure garden sites adequately for children by laying out playgrounds and common areas,
- to cooperate with schools and nursery schools for the sensitization for nature (school-gardens, practical biology course, day in the garden, activities),
- to prefer families with children while putting garden plots at the disposal of interested persons.

They ask the authorities on all levels:

- to recognize and support leisure gardens as place for education for nature,
- to support these efforts with all the means that are at their disposal and to include the costs for the creation of leisure garden sites in their financial planning,
- to reserve grounds for the creation of leisure gardens in the urban areas in order to increase the quality of life both for adults and children and young people,
- to stimulate the creation of school-gardens in order to sensitise children for the interconnections of nature,
- to introduce the subject "garden" in the schools programs.

Warsaw, June 19th, 2004



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