



# Hyphen 42

Office International du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux  
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## Hyphen 42

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# The Congress in Poland

## Eugeniusz Kondracki

This year my three years' mandate as president of the International Office came to an end. As usual this mandate was closed by a congress, organized by the national federation of the acting president. The 35th international allotment garden congress was organized this year in Cracow, Poland from August 28th till August 31st. The preparatory works for the congress were started more than a year before by the International Office and the Council of the Polish allotment garden federation. The preparation took place on two levels: The congress subject was prepared and all the organization dealt with.

The congress met and discussed a general subject that could as well be considered as the slogan of the congress: "The future of the allotment gardens in Europe". One could ask the question: What was the reason to chose this main subject for the congress?

The Office has 15 members, i.e. 15 national federations and there is a co-operation agreement with the Japanese allotment garden federation. All these national federations have own traditions, own experiences, an own heritage and an own opinion on the

importance of the allotment gardens for the allotment garden families and the society. It happens as well often that the national federations have unsolved own problems and have made disagreeable experiences. There are as well subjects that unify the national



**Eugeniusz KONDRACKI**



federations and all the allotment gardeners throughout Europe.

I am convinced that we all are proud of our own traditions, which are similar in most of the national federations.

I am convinced that the idea of the allotment garden movement in its own unifies all the national federations in Europe. It is true that this idea has evolved over the 140 years of allotment garden development in Europe and has changed because of the economic and cultural development of the States and the societies. But the main reason for the existence and development of the allotment gardens has been maintained. The poorer a society the more justified is the maintaining and the realization of the allotment garden idea. Thanks to this idea 3 million allotment garden families in Europe have an allotment garden, a plot of land on which they can satisfy their economic and cultural needs, their wish for recreation and finally the integration (which is especially important in the Western countries of the European Union). Families that have not an important income can, thanks to this idea and to the work of the national federations, receive "300 sqm of green paradise" as we say in Poland.

In Poland exists an allotment garden site in the small town Koźmin Wielkopolski, which was founded in 1824. The town authorities at that period decided to help the poorest of their inhabitants and gave them a plot of land on a common communal ground. They supported these people both while planting and cultivating the allotment gardens. This was very positively appreciated by the inhabitants. The garden has remained on the same site up to now. It is called Powstańców Wielkopolskich and is well cultivated. The allotment gardeners and the town authorities maintain this tradition and prove the creation and development of the allotment garden site by documents that are archived.

I mention this example in order to show how the idea of the allotment

garden movement was born in Poland. And I think that the beginning of our movement in the other European countries was similar.

This creation and development did not always happen in a very conscious process, but there was always the desire to help. The allotment gardens in Europe as well as in Poland have a long history of development as far as both their number and their functions for the allotment garden families and the society are concerned.

Today we see in Poland, in Czechia and in Slovakia but as well in Germany and in other West-European countries sometimes an unfavourable approach as far as the allotment gardens are concerned. Since 18 years the Polish federation leads a difficult battle in order to protect the allotment gardens in their existence and to allow their continuous development in order to safeguard the idea and the meaning of the allotment gardens in the modern society. Such battles exist as well – possibly with a different intensity and different effects – in other European countries. Therefore we should discuss the question: Is the allotment garden idea and the organizational form of the allotment garden movement no more up to date or do the allotment gardens still have a right to exist in the modern world and in an integrated Europe? The Polish allotment gardeners think that the existence and the development of the allotment gardens in Poland in its actual legal and organisational form are still up to date and necessary. The allotment gardens will continue to be developed, be better cultivated and will receive new functions according to the requirements of the social and economic development.

When the existence of the allotment gardens in Poland were in danger because of the proposals of a political party in relationship with the amendment of the allotment garden law, the allotment gardeners brought 614.000 signatures in order to protect the law, the allotment gardens and the federation from proposals to expropriate

them on their own grounds. Another fact is that since years the federation checks the legal situation of the grounds on which the allotment gardens are situated and informs the bodies of the allotment garden associations and the allotment gardeners themselves on possible attempts to expropriate their grounds. Today the legal situation of the grounds is that only 10 till 15 % can be expropriated.

The congress was therefore the best forum to discuss the most important problem of the allotment gardens in Europe i.e. their future.

Therefore we have asked the German and Slovakian federations for

in this town.

For time reasons we could not present all the richness of the historic town of Cracow during the congress programme. The programme nevertheless allowed the participants to see the most important monuments: the castle of the King (Wawel), the market and the market halls (Sukiennice), the quarter Kazimierz and a few other monuments. We visited as well the Salt mine in Wieliczka b. Cracow, which are no more operational, but are a unique monument.

The guests visited as well 3 allotment garden sites in Cracow: „Debniki”,



cooperation and preparation of the lectures. We thought that with their lectures and with a lecture from the Polish federation the knowledge, the experiences and the prognosis on the importance and the future of the allotment gardens in these countries could be transmitted to the delegates. We thought that afterwards the national federations could present their opinion in the workshops.

In this way the importance of the allotment gardens in Europe could be evaluated by the congress. With the adopted resolution a contribution could be made to their development.

The congress met in Cracow. It is the former Polish capital city and the cultural capital city of our country today. Cracow is a very nice town with numerous unique monuments that one should get to know. Cracow allowed many people to experience spiritual souvenirs that one can only discover

the allotment garden site Rydel and „Prokocim”. The participants could get acquainted with the life and the problems of the Polish allotment gardeners as well as with the importance of the allotment gardens in Poland for the allotment garden families, the social groups of the towns as well as the towns themselves.

Many Polish allotment gardeners from different regions and allotment garden sites took part in the congress. So the congress was a good opportunity to integrate the allotment gardeners all over Europe, to enable them to meet each other, to take up contacts between regional federations and associations.

The Polish allotment garden federation worked hard to welcome with joy the allotment gardeners from all the countries according to the tradition and to the Polish hospitality.

# Decision protocol of the general assembly held in Cracow on August 28th, 2008

Were present: the federations of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Great-Britain, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden and Switzerland

Were represented:  
the federations from Finland and Norway,

Was absent: the federation of Czechia

Beginning of the meeting 9.00 a.m.

- 1) The agenda is adopted with unanimity.
- 2) The reports of the extraordinary and ordinary general assembly in Luxembourg are adopted with unanimity.
- 3) After discussions and two additional modifications the second draft of the resolution is adopted with unanimity and will be presented for adoption to the congress.
- 4) It is decided that the resolution will be sent by the Office to the European Parliament and to the European Commission. Afterwards the federations should ask the members of the Commission and the national members of the European Parliament to support this resolution.

It is as well decided that the Office should send the resolution to the national institutions, authorities and personalities which will be indicated by the national federations. If necessary this invoice can be done in common by the Office and the national federation.

- 5) It is decided that from 2010 onwards the affiliation fees will be linked to the Luxembourgish salary index with the position known in August of the year when the decision is taken.

It is decided that the executive board should deal with the question of the maximum provisions to be made by the Office. Should the provisions exceed this amount, the affiliation fees will not be adapted by the index. Should they fall below this amount, an index adaptation will be made.

- 6) The Belgian federation informs that the seminar will take place in Gent on 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th September 2009.



*The delegates at work*

ber 2009. Arrival of the delegates: Sunday September 6th. Monday morning: lectures, in the afternoon: visit of Gent and of allotment garden sites; Tuesday morning: workshops then in the afternoon: visit of Brussels and possibly of the European institutions; Wednesday morning: closing session afternoon: departure.

After discussion it is decided that a Belgian, Slovakian and Swedish person will make a lecture during the seminar.

It is as well decided that the meeting in Belgium in 2009 is a seminar and not a study session.

- 7) The English federation confirms that a study session will be organised in Birmingham in 2010.
- 8) There are no questions on the report concerning the cooperation with the international organisations. The problem raised concerning the directive on water will be discussed during a next meeting.
- 9) On demand of the Polish federation and on proposal of the executive board the general assembly grants with unanimity the "Golden Rose" to the Polish town of Czestochowa. The motivation is both the support given by the town authorities to the allotment gardeners and above all the integration of all the allotment garden sites in the newest town planning schemes.
- 10) M. WEIRICH informs that the general assembly will take place next year in Luxembourg in the City Hotel. This hotel is situated not far away from the Hotel Pr sident. The deadlines for the inscription have absolutely to be observed. During this statutory general assembly the elections of a new executive board for the coming 4 years will take place.
- 11) E. KONDRACKI informs that this is the last general assembly of his mandate as international president. He thanks for the support of the federations and of the executive board as well as for the help he received. He wishes success, luck and as less problems as possible to the Danish president.

End of the meeting: 11.45 a.m.



# Opening session:



*Opening speech by Eugeniusz KONDRACKI*



*The „honorary diploma“ is given to Mr. François Rolland*



*The „Golden Rose“ is given to the town of Caen*



*Address by Malou WEIRICH*



*The „Golden Rose“ is given to the town of Czestochowa*



*The „Golden Rose“ is given to Dr. Mainczyk*



# Congress work:



**Gerlinde Krause lectures on the need to adapt the function of the allotment gardens to the changes in society**



**Eugeniusz Kondracki lectures on the role and the importance of the national federations for the future of the allotment gardens**



**Ivan Hricovsky lectures on the subject concerning the future generations of the allotment gardeners**



**One workshop**



**Brainstorming and gaining strength before the workshops (French delegates)**



**Even during the aperitif the exchange of information continues (Delegates from the Netherlands and Sweden)**

# Congress work:



*Wilhelm Wohatschek draws the conclusions from the congress*



*Speech by Eugeniusz Kondracki*



*Address by Preben Jacobsen*



*Transmission of the presidency to Preben Jacobsen*



*Closing ceremony*



*Signature of the resolution*

# Moments of fellowship:



*Visit and dinner in the Salt mine „Wielicka“ near Cracow*



*All the presidents are enrolled in the honorary register here: Walter Schaffner*



*Lars Oscarson*



*Folklore evening*



*Closing dinner*

Alloment garden site:  
**Prokocim:**





## RESOLUTION

### *XXXV International Congress of Allotment and Family Gardens held in Poland from August 28-31 2008*

#### ***THE FUTURE OF ALLOTMENT GARDENS IN EUROPE***

The representatives of the European federations from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great-Britain, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden and Switzerland associating almost 3 million allotment gardeners, proceeding in Cracow during the XXXV International Congress of Allotment and Family Gardens, acknowledge the necessity for the further development of allotment gardens in Europe, which for over a hundred years have had an enormous meaning for families, society and environment.

#### **The participants of the congress acknowledge:**

- That the idea of allotment gardening is still up to date and that the allotment gardens continue to be necessary for the future generations. Therefore it is necessary to preserve them in Europe. This will demand from our movement and from each national federation conscious policies and specific actions,
- That it is essential to protect the allotment gardens for the future by law. This is the basis for a further development of the allotment gardens and a guarantee of their preservation for the coming generations,
- That a State and government policy aiming at supporting allotment gardening is necessary. The allotment gardens assume social missions: They are a place of meeting and fellowship for young and old, families, people of different generations, workless people and professionally active people of different social and national origins. Therefore the governments should provide proper policies and support for the national allotment garden federations,
- That there is a need to promote the idea of allotment gardening, especially by internet, press and television. City inhabitants should have the possibility to get informed on the various values and advantages of the allotment gardens, and in consequence to appreciate their positive meaning for the urban communities and the environment. Action must be taken to achieve social support and create a positive image of the allotment garden movement,
- That the allotment gardens are an essential element for the physical and mental health of people and increase the quality of life of all citizens. Healthy fruit and vegetables, cultivated in the own garden enrich the menu. The contact with the growth and the development of nature and the creativity while gardening stimulate the senses. Contacts and fellowship in the association help to avoid loneliness.

**The participants of the congress recommend:**

- That the European allotment garden federations develop a greater activity with the European Union. Such a large number of Europeans should be present on the European level, and should be recognized by the European Institutions,
- That the functioning and management of allotment gardens should be improved. This involves developing new gardens and modernising existing ones with the thought of fulfilling the changing needs of future generations,
- That the federations should establish or strengthen their cooperation with the municipal authorities. This refers especially to the task to protect the continuous existence of the allotment gardens within the city zoning policies. This requests the inscription of the allotment gardens in the urban planning schemes,
- That the federations adopt a rational policy concerning the process of allotment garden liquidations, because the future of the European allotments also depends on this. The federations must make their decisions in these matters with deliberation, properly reviewing each situation and must guarantee the restoration of liquidated gardens.

**The congress**, concerned for the future of allotment gardens in Europe, relying on their traditions and achievements, fully convinced about their positive values for the society and cities:

- 1) **Calls** upon all governments and Parliaments for support and help in continuing and developing allotment gardens in all European countries,
- 2) **Calls** upon the European Institutions for protection of allotment gardens in all member states, and also for creating political and legal conditions for the preservation and development of these gardens,
- 3) **Requests**, that the allotment movement throughout Europe will be recognized by European States and governments.

The Congress is convinced that this resolution will receive a positive response from the national governments, as well as the European Union.



**Eugeniusz KONDRACKI**  
President



**Wilhelm WOHATSCHEK**  
President of the executive board



**Malou WEIRICH**  
Secretary general

*Cracow, August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2008*

# Lecture: The allotment gardeners and nature (2nd part)

## IV. Allotment gardens and protection of nature

### Protection of rare species

In Poland, insects form between 60 – 85 % of all known animals, according to various estimations, between 17 – 36 % of them are threatened of disappearing. The Polish red list of endangered and protected species contains 2173 species some of which can also be found in allotment gardens. Among the rare and particularly useful insects are coleopterons of the family of the carabus, with carabus and calosoma eating other insects at various stages of their evolution. These beautiful insects live in trees where they feed on caterpillars of butterflies.

Old trees and branches offer a place for cerambycidae and it is useful to keep such trees in allotment gardens to allow the development of these rare species. The red list of protected insects also contains almost all types of bumblebees of which the number has fallen in Poland because of environmental conditions. Allotment gardens offer a good environment for the development of these useful insects as they can find enough food and places to build their nests.

### Creating a butterfly garden

Butterfly gardens are an alternative for gardens of a frequently uniform composition based on lawn and a not always proper choice of plants (mostly coniferous). Butterfly plants are not only those providing food to adult butterflies but also those, as nettle, promoting the evolution of butterfly



caterpillars. Persil and carrots, if not treated with insecticides, are perfect for the development of the machaon. It is not difficult to create a butterfly garden and some knowledge about the plants preferred by the various species is sufficient.

Ornamental plants attracting day butterflies: tagetes, asters, buddleia, carnation, heliotrope, nepeta, lythrum hyssopifolia, lavender, chenopodiaceae, thyme, calendula officinalis, solidago canadensis, monarda hybrida, sedum, rudbeckia, eupatorium.

Ornamental plants attracting night butterflies: lonicera caprifolium, datura stramonium

Pollen producing plants: attracting insects living in groups, hymenoptera, eiptera as well as centaurea cyanus, stachys recta, phacelle, fagopyrum esculentum, broom, clover, lythrum

salicaria, dandelion, salvia, erica, echium; trees: acacia, linden.

Plants on which the caterpillars of various butterfly species feed and develop: nettle (nymphalidae), apiaceae (papilio machaon), phaseolus (some lycaenidae species), herbes (some rare butterfly species).

### Protection of rare plants

219 plant species are protected in Poland. One way of protecting them is to grow them in allotment gardens and it is possible to find such plants in these gardens or home gardens where they come from private gardeners or botanic gardens. In this respect, allotment gardens have the same role as botanic gardens protecting plants of which the number decreases because of the intervention of man in nature.

Species	Environment	Risk of extinction
<b>Adonis vernalis</b>	Gras	Available on the market
<b>Anemone sylvestris</b>	„	„
<b>Cipripedium calceolus</b>	„	„
<b>Pulsatilla pratensis</b>	„	„
<b>Aquilegia vulgaris</b>	Wood	„
<b>Galantus nivalis</b>	„	„
<b>Hepatica nobilis</b>	„	„
<b>Affodill Liliun martagon</b>	„	„
<b>Matteucia struthiopteris</b>	„	„
<b>Arnica montana</b>	Mountains	„
<b>Crocus scepusiensis</b>	„	„
<b>Trollius europaeus</b>	„	„

**Species printed in bold can be frequently found in allotment gardens and home gardens.**

#### V. Protection of cultural values in allotment gardens

##### Protection of old tree and bush species

In this field allotment gardens play an important role. Growing old species in these gardens (and local types) that can no longer be found on the market allows maintaining the biological diversity and the protection of unique taste and nutritive values. Old species can be saved from disappearing and form some sort of genetic base for the future to cultivate various types of fruit. One point in the treaty on the protection of biological diversity ratified by Poland covers the “obligation to protect domesticated plants and animals, in particular local and old species”. Over the last years, demand has been increasing for old apple tree species (golden reinette, grey reinette, gravensteiner, kron-selska, gloger) and pear trees (Josefine, Paris, Köstliche Graue, Boika,

Kongresówka, Pstragówka) as well as cherry trees (Bladorózowa, Kurze-go, Wolska, Przybrodzka).

Growing protective organisms (f.ex. *Osmia bicornis*)

*Osmia rufa* (in Polish murarka ogrodowa) figures among the most efficient fertilizing insects building nests in natural shelters (holes in walls, trees, pieces of wood). It is easy to grow and harmless (belonging to the insects without stinger).

##### Back to usual procedures to grow and treat plants

Ancient and frequently forgotten methods for plant protection should be spread in allotment gardens as they are easy to use and inoffensive for human beings.

Procedures for the protection of plants recommended in allotment gardens:

- Agro technical and hygiene procedures – based on the elimination of residual harvest (reduces the risk of attack by blasmodiophora bras-

sicae, species of fusarium, psila rosae as well as bacteria on cabbage and onions),

- Selection of dates for planting, the environment and the consecutive cultures,
- Mechanic procedures – cutting red current and raspberry bushes to reduce the number of spiders, pseudopeziza ribis and cecidomyiidae,
- Use net and tissue covers,
- Procedures for culture – choice of plants taking into account their resistance against illnesses and harmful organisms,
- Biological procedures – appropriate use of protective organisms (possible if nets are used to cover plants),
- Biotechnical procedures – use of colored clay panels and lures with pheromone to catch and destroy harmful organisms,
- Use vegetal treatment preparations (f.ex. based on garlic or grapefruit).



### Setting ethical bases in allotment gardens

A large part of Polish allotment gardeners continue to use chemical pesticides which is in contradiction with current ecological procedures for growing, treating and protecting plants. Many people don't understand the necessity to protect biodiversity and the importance of the situation is frequently not considered. A «Decalogue» was established for the allotment gardeners and published in the specialized paper „Działkowiec”. It provides a list of recommendations minimizing the risks of chemical protection and promoting activities, which contribute to the protection of species in allotment gardens.

Decalogue for the use of chemical protection of plants in allotment gardens

#### Decalogue of the allotment gardener

- Using insecticides I care for my own safety and the one of the people that are together with me in the allotment garden;

- I am not alone in the garden, my neighbour has the same right for quietness and rest as I do;

- Protecting plants against harmful organisms and illnesses, I comply with the rules of allotment gardens and the recommendations from the code of good practices regarding plant protection;

- Before protecting fruit and vegetables I choose the most safe procedure and try to use non chemical methods;

- I consider that other people will eat as well the fruit and vegetables that I am selling or offering to them. These fruit and vegetables should be a source of health and not a risk because of badly used pesticides and manor;

- I care for the diversity of species in the allotment garden and try to create good conditions for the development of protective organisms which frequently, even without my knowledge, reduce the number of harmful organisms;

- I know that every living creature in the allotment garden is not there

by chance and can have a positive influence on the quality of fruit and vegetables in the garden;

- I care for the environment, the plants in the garden and treat them with care taking into account that the quality of my life will also improve if I am in a beautiful garden with a lot of different species of plants and animals;

- I am aware that the means to protect fruit evolve constantly with science and the objectives of the garden production;

- I keep informed and broaden my knowledge in a permanent way.

### VI. Advocating healthy living in allotment gardens

One of the conditions for healthy food is to grow fruit and vegetables of excellent quality and high nutritive value in the allotment garden. The main problem is to avoid or minimize contamination of fruit and vegetables by heavy metals and azotes, nitrates and derivatives of nitrites. The location of allotment gardens close to main roads and industrial sites relea-

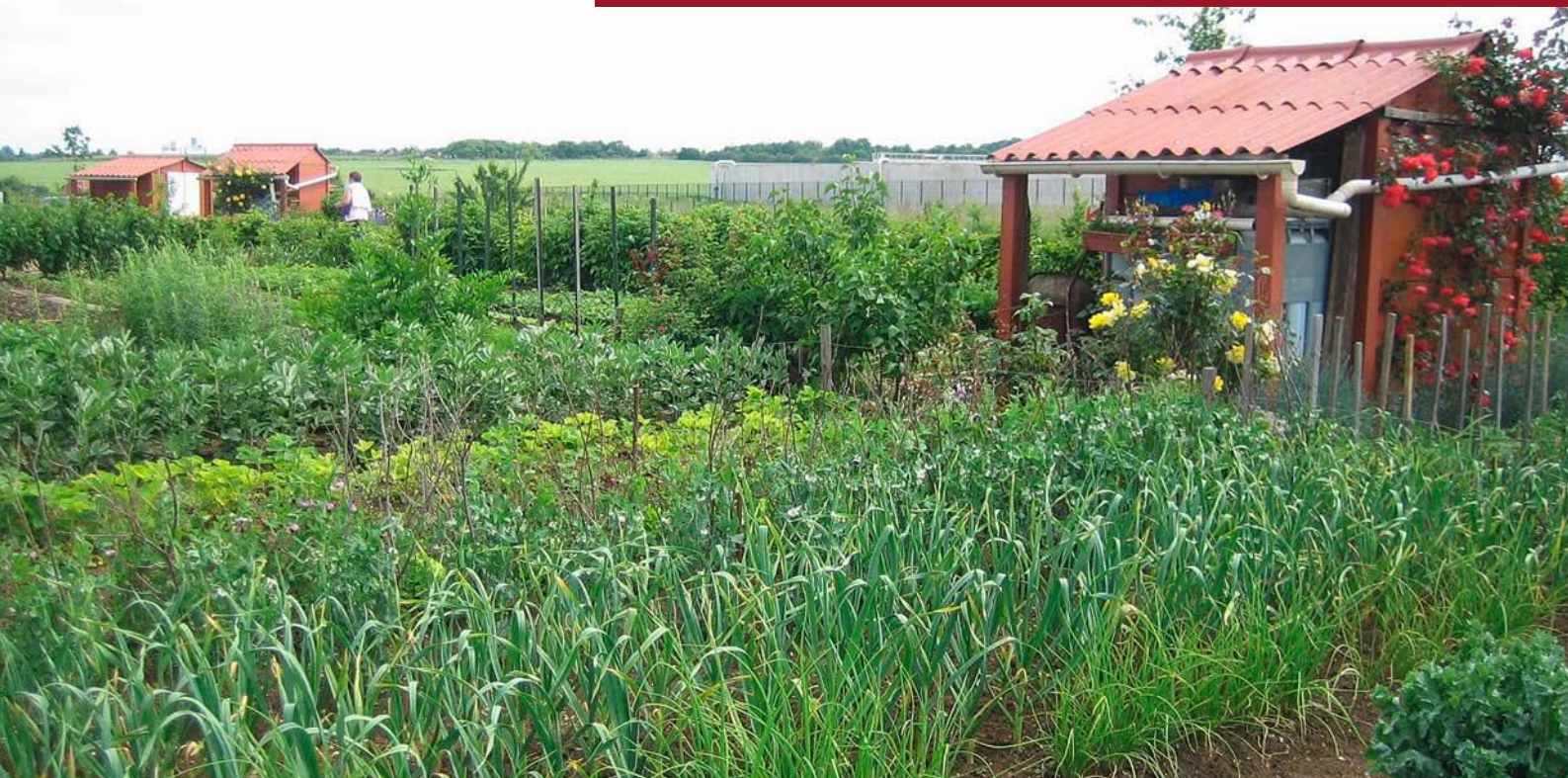




Using toxic substances increases this risk. Inappropriate use of manure, storage and transport can increase the risk of nitrates. By complying with the following recommendations, the risk linked to harmful substances can be reduced or avoided.

**Methods for the limitation of heavy metals and nitrates in vegetables:**

- Use chalk for acid soils (reduces access of harmful substances as lead and zinc);
- Increase organic substances in the soil by animal manure, compost and green manure to improve the qualities of the soil and bind heavy metal in the ground;
- Select species (vegetables with leaves collect larger quantities of heavy metal);
- Grow vegetables on heavy soil releasing heavy metals to a lesser extent than light soils;
- Reduce azotes, substitute saltpeter with ammonium, reduce manure for growing plants (especially before the harvest) to reduce nitrate levels in plants – especially for vegetables with a short vegetation period and red beets;
- Use appropriate quantities of animal manure as well as compost and green manure with azotes in a form accessible to plants as azotes is released in great quantity during the mineralization process;
- Vegetables at the end of their growing period contain less nitrates as if harvested at an early stage;
- Vegetables with leaves should be harvested after lunchtime on sunny days as they contain fewer nitrates as in the morning and on cloudy days.



*Allotment garden in „Talant“ near Dijon in France*

# France: Biodiversity in the garden

Joëlle Petyt

The garden as a space to grow vegetables can also become (or stay!) a living space. Combining healthy food thanks to a biological gardening while preserving the natural balance in this garden is essential. This means maintaining this micro biodiversity also in our small gardens!

## **Maintaining biodiversity in our gardens**

How is it possible to combine growing vegetables, fruit, flowers and herbs with the many plants and animals that live in our gardens?

It is easy if we consider associating plants known for their dynamic impact on plants or action against pest. In

this case they become a natural biological means to treat parasites and sicknesses for instance by placing some herbs close to various vegetables.

Flowers are also important in this type of beneficial associations. Carnation is repulsive and efficient against the carrot fly and the nematode on roots (on leek, salads, cabbage)

Borage is good against lice as is Indian cress. A row of these flowers along beans will attract the black lice of Fabacea (which can then be collected by hand).

Natural (non chemical) manure will

keep the soil in good state. The right proportions are required. It is a question of common sense:

- manure of cows or horses in a reasonable quantity is good if appropriately decomposed and mixed with compost.
- nitrogen from dried blood is good for green vegetables and flowers, also for fruit if required.
- horn is good soil treatment as it progressively diffuses into the ground.
- castor bean turf brings potassium to fruit trees.
- alga bring minerals and are good for potatoes, cabbage and other classic cultures in coastal regions.

As to the natural treatment of late blight, horsetail decoction is better than copper treatment (bouillie bordelaise) as excess copper will accumulate in the soil and become toxic (1 or 2 treatments are enough).

Sulfur is good against Oïdium (to be used in humid weather conditions) as with temperatures above 20°C it is toxic for plants.



**Allotment garden in „Longvic“ near Dijon in France**

To get rid of loppers (on cabbage for instance), try a natural treatment with *Bacillus thuringiensis*, or as a prevention use broom or tomatoes sprouts as a repulsive barrier (if there is no significant invasion yet). Use nettle water or comfrey which fortify in a dilution of 10% and are repulsive for insects in a dilution of 30%.

Finally many small animals are useful in the garden if you provide shelter for them, branches covered with a plastic foil will attract hedgehogs that eat up snails, larvae and other insects.

Ivy growing on the north side or cree-

ping along the ground harbours insects as butterflies and bees which pollinate vegetables and fruit.

Ground beetles, beetles and other types of insects are excellent helpers in the garden. They also show that the garden is in good balance and health. Even if they eat up a small part of your harvest (mainly pears) do not destroy them. Catch them in pots turned upside down and stuffed with straw then put them on the infested plants at the time of the harvest.

To get rid of snails think about the natural “traps” like stones under which they crawl and you can just lift them up in the morning and carry them outside of the garden to a place where they can do no harm.

As you see, biodiversity in the garden is mostly about reducing treatments that destroy a useful fauna and sterilize the soil. This also means accept that some flowers grow and offer shelter to butterflies and other insects. It is better to wait until the end of spring to cut the grass around the garden even if this means one hour more of manual extraction of weed! There is much to win as more fruit and vegetables get pollen, which means a richer harvest !

Last but not least, leave flowers in the common parts and corners of the garden as they give shelter to many animals that are necessary to maintain biodiversity in our gardens ! Flowers are nice for the eyes and good for insects bringing pollen to your plants.

Biodiversity – what is it ?

Biodiversity covers all living beings of our planet from the smallest bacteria to the largest mammals including all plants from moss to giant trees.

Biodiversity covers the entire natural space (forests, fields, water, etc.) as well as the landscapes. It relates to water and air as indispensable elements of the life of all the species.

**Maintaining biodiversity - why ?**

The more an environment is diversified (with animals and plants) the higher is the natural balance of the ecosystem in which species evolve.

This is fundamental if we consider that about 100 species disappear every day in the world due to degradation and overpopulation of their living area.

This reduction of species increases the fragility of our environment.

**Some tricks for an ecological garden**

- Absinth, nettle, rhubarb or mint water act against lice if spread over leaves.
- Euphorba, absinth act against snails.
- Achillae Millefolium activates compost.
- Burdock and chamomile help fruit to mature.
- Marigold, dandelion, valeriane officinalis and tomatoes (fermented) stimulate the growth of plants.
- Horsetail, absinth, tansy act against rust and oidium as do salvia, burdock and tansy against late blight.
- Nettle water acts against mites and blackcurrant against cabbage lice and other crucifers).

**What can be done against the disappearance of species?**

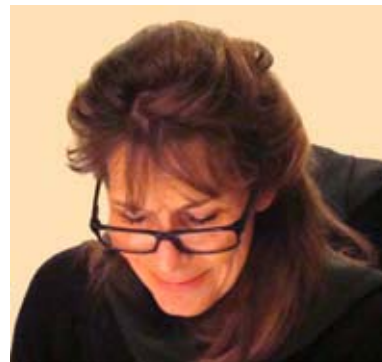
This disappearance of vegetal and animal species is essentially due to man: pollution, deforesting, drying of water land, excessive use of raw ma-

terial,... are only some of the causes reducing our biodiversity for about fifty years now. The introduction of invasive species (turtles, coypu, epazote, etc.) have also lead to the reduction of local species that could not adapt or resist to this type of "predator" in entire regions and countries!

Measures to protect areas have been taken (ZNIEF, national parks, reintroduction of species, conservation) as well increased awareness about the environment: no transport of endangered species, rehabilitation of bushes and biotopes, maintenance of natural living areas,...are some examples of efficient measures over the last thirty years.

**useful insects**

- Collembola (recycling, cleaning)
- Staphylinus (recycling, cleaning)
- Forficula auricularia (recycling cleaning)
- Cetonia (pollenizing)
- Episyphus balteatus (against lice)
- Bumblebee, bee (pollenizing)
- Wasp, bumblebee (carnivor, against flies)



**Joëlle Petyt**

**Bushes useful to biodiversity**

- Whin (Ulex europaeus)
- Wild rose (Rosa canina)
- Broom (Cytisus scoparius)
- Myrte (Myrica gali) : in the south
- Bramble (Rubus fruticosus)
- Ligustrum vulgare
- Hazel (Corylus avellana)
- Sloe tree (Prunus spinosa)
- Blackcurrant (Sambucus nigra)

Note: Keep bushes around the garden and along the roads as they are biotopes rich in animals, and plants and insects.

Article published in the review „Jardin Familial de France“ no. 447/2008



**Allotment garden in Biel (Switzerland)**

# Luxembourg: „The allotment gardeners look over the garden fence “ (Part II)

Jean Kieffer, President of the Luxembourgish allotment garden federation



**That would be a federation without decisional organs?**

The administrative organs are the General Assembly, the Executive board, the Committee of Directors, the honorary Council and the Council of Auditors.

The executive board is advised by some consultative commissions as for example the consultative Council.

The general assembly composed by the delegates of the affiliated sections assumes the direction of the federation. It meets and decides by observing the conditions fixed in the statutes of the federation. It is alone responsible for the direction of the federation.

This administration of the federation has to be done under the exact observation of all the stipulations fixed in the statutes of the federation.

As an intensive discussion among several hundreds of delegates from 139 sections can not take place adequately in a time period that is necessary limited during a congress, all the documents are sent in due time to all the sections with the request to present their opinion before the general assembly during the regional meetings of delegates, that are organised before the general assembly.

Only in this way, due to the great spreading of the federation, all the matters can be discussed in great depth in order to allow a good decision making.

The general assembly nominates in free elections a certain number of persons of confidence, who will constitute the executive board and these persons will on its behalf exercise the moral and material administration of the federation.

Every member of a section can be elected.

The executive board has to report to the general assembly of the delegates.

The executive board proposes the chairman to the general assembly for confirmation.

The chairman, who has been confirmed by the general assembly is as well president of the federation and his duty is to preside the general assembly of the federation.

He assumes the presidency of the committee of directors composed of the president of the federation, 4 vice-presidents, the secretary general, the general treasurer and the editor. This committee is in charge of the current affairs on behalf of the executive board.

The honorary Council has the mission to support the executive board, to increase the solemnity of official celebrations by their presence and to help

to find solutions if litigations cannot be solved by the executive board.

The president of the federation has the presidency of this honorary Council.

The auditors have the obligation to check the financial management of the federation and check the accounts, as well as to acknowledge the assets. They have to report about this checking to the delegates composing the general assembly.

The auditors are as well designated

So as the regions cannot be considered as a federation within the federation, so the regional commissions can neither get an independent mission nor assume some responsibility in the administration of the federation.

A possible arbitration mission between the executive board and the sections can only be given to it by the executive board. Every other opinion would mean that the regional boards have missions for the consequences of which the executive board would alone be responsible before the ge-



by the general assembly and have only to make report to this general assembly.

As well every year there is a checking of the properties of the federation with information given to the general assembly by the persons having done this survey.

The executive board is advised by 4 regional commissions. Their mission consists in supporting the executive board in the realisation of its tasks. They are considered as an organ that gets its mission from the executive boards, gets directives from it and has to make report on its activities to the executive board.

neral assembly.

Additional consultative commissions are for example the finance commission, the commission for media, the commission for environment protection, the film commission and different other work-groups for specific problems

The "Conseil Consultatif" composed by representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, of Housing, Family, Culture, Environment Protection and Education advises the executive board for specific technical problems.

As you certainly have realised by the preceding descriptions the Luxem-

bourg allotment garden federation is different from all the other federations affiliated with the International Office because a very important part of the members are home gardeners.

This can be explained by the fact, that there were very few allotment garden sites in Luxembourg up to the fifties. Only with the beginning of urban development when our typical and more rural influenced small towns developed to urban concentrations, it became important to create allotment gar-

Today Luxembourg counts approximately 2000 plots unified in thirty allotment garden sites covering a surface of approximately 40 hectares. Our efforts to get an allotment garden law, which had been among others elaborated with the help of the International Office, aiming at a legal protection could up to now not be adopted. The reason was a constitutional problem on the protection of property.

**Conclusions**

“Living together supposes that we understand each other, appreciate existing differences and speak to each other. The European unification work is above all the history of a dialogue between cultures”, has written Madame Viviane Reding, member of the European Commission. These words meant for policy and economy should as well be a guideline for us allotment gardeners.

Throughout Europe the friends of fruit and vegetables have one important common aim: the protection of the family and allotment garden as a space of relaxation and rest, a space of nature near the home.

All allotment gardeners are conscious of their responsibility for nature and are careful to harm nature as less as possible.

Our today's challenges are to do everything that is necessary, so that as well in future citizens can have at their disposal gardening land. In fact we are worried because the pressure to get the allotment garden land for construction and industrial purposes increases more and more.

The allotment garden sites that have been created over the years by the allotment gardeners are threatened.



dens for the well-being of the society.

Both before and after that date the acquisition or putting at the disposal of adequate grounds is very problematic because of the high ground costs.

Most of the allotment garden sites have been created on grounds that have been put at our disposal by protectors, by regulated leasehold contracts concluded for an indeterminate period of time. They can be terminated at any time.

This is the reason why the allotment gardeners invest less in their sheds.

Some sections could buy their own ground or some authorities put adequate ground at their disposal, which is very laudable.

The Luxembourg allotment garden federation hopes that this exchange of ideas has enabled you to look over your neighbour's garden fence.

This view aimed at allowing a better understanding and a friendly cooperation with one another.

A good neighbour relationship should be an evidence for every home and allotment gardener.

It should as well be the same between associations and national federations.

Especially as in Europe we become closer and closer. The Schengen agreement, the common currency and motorways have brought us closer from a geographical point of view but let us hope as well between people.

May the European cooperation contribute that our allotment garden movement gets new aims and strength, so that as well in future we can continue to realise activities in the interest of all the societies and that we succeed in sensitising the coming generations for the vegetable and fruit cultivation as a meaningful, healthy, restful and worthy leisure time occupation.



# Denmark: Alletiders Have – Our Kolonihaver I Danmark

H.E. SØRENSEN OG Sven –Eric RAVN

**At first the gardens –  
later the federation**

The first allotment gardens in Denmark were laid out in 1655 when the town Fredericia sprang up as a fort. Outside the ramparts, gardens were laid out, but they became dilapidated. The gardens laid out at Hjelm by Aabenraa in Sønderjylland in 1821 still exist. This allotment society is among the oldest in the world and it is now preserved.

Late in the 19th century allotment societies sprang up in Denmark, mostly near the big industrial towns where light, air and supplementary provisions were needed. In 1891 a labour organisation took the initiative to the first gardens in Copenhagen and later many more followed. At that time things had started in Aalborg. The pioneer was Jørgen Berthelsen, who later played a very important role in the first years of the federation and he ended as the president of the federation.

In 1906 more than fifty allotment societies existed near Copenhagen, and at that time the first plans of organizing the allotment societies were aired. In 1908 the federation was a fact and immediately the authorities of the capital were approached to obtain uniform leases and terms of

notices. Since then, this has been an objective for the federation.

After some quiet and profitable years during the 1930s and the 1940s the allotment gardens again came into focus in the 1950s. The exodus from the country to the cities meant housing shortage in the big cities and homeless sought out into the gardens and used the allotment houses as residences all the year round. That, of course, was illegal and to avoid this objectionable practice it was suggested that in Copenhagen new allotment houses should be built without a roof!

In the 1950s the federation grew to such an extent that it was split up in divisions. At that time it held 167 allotment societies and 20.000 allotment gardeners were member.

One of the absolute heights for the federation was the new law for allotment gardens which was passed in 2001. To a great extent the Danish federation used the experiences from Germany, where a law was passed the previous year.

**Pictures from top to bottom ►  
Reception in the town hall  
Opening of the congress**



Another very important milestone in the history of the federation was the judgement delivered by the Supreme Court in 2007. It established that the rules the Danish federation of Allotment Gardeners again and again had introduced concerning maximum prices for allotment houses and movables were in force all over the country and for all allotment gardens.

That put a stop to unintended speculation. The big social object, which the federation thinks important to the success in Denmark, was once more established. In connection to this, new rules at assessment were introduced in 2008 to secure rewarding the well kept allotment house but not allowing a profit.

The federation has had 11 chairmen, and especially Ivan Larsen (chairman 1985-2007) is remembered because of his engagement both in Denmark and internationally. His big day was when the law for allotment gardens was passed and he was busy planning the celebration of the centenary of the federation. His death in the summer of 2007 prevents his participation in the celebration. Preben Jacobsen, Copenhagen, was appointed temporarily as chairman.

From the year of 2000 Mads Kofod has been leader of the federation secretariat in Copenhagen.

In the centenary about 40.000 allotment gardeners are members of the federation. In most big cities there are waiting lists for new gardens and new gardens have been laid out during the past year.

**Internationally: Beyond the hedge**

Denmark was cofounder of the international federation in 1926 and ever since Denmark has worked to give the idea of allotment gardens the best possible conditions in Europe.

Since 1920 there has been a Nordic cooperation concerning allotment gardens. An invitation from the Danish Federation of Allotment Gardeners to the allotment gardeners of Stock-

holm to participate in an exhibition in Copenhagen that year was the direct cause for establishing the Swedish federation, "Koloniträdgårdsförbundet" in 1921. A certain Nordic cooperation occurred until World War II, but not until 1947 the Nordisk Kolonihaveforbund was formally founded.

Through many years the Danish chairman has represented the Nordic countries in the executive committee of the Office International, and Scandinavia has always had great power of penetration on the European level. Latest the Nordic countries hosted a study seminar in 2007 where all 15 members of Office International participated. In 2008 Office International has about 3 million members while the Nordic countries have members as follows: Norway about 2.000, Finland about 5.000, Sweden about 25.000 and Denmark about 40.000.

The Danish chairman was in front of a protest march in Oslo, when the city council in Oslo wanted to close down allotment gardens in the town. This closing down was taken from the agenda. Also in Poland there have been protests when the Polish authorities wanted to close down allotment gardens to give back the land to the former owners. This meant that also these plans were given up.

Summary of the book published at the occasion of the Danish federations's 100th anniversary

**Pictures from top to bottom ►**

- **The delegates at work**
- **The representatives of the Dutch and Belgian federations and of the Office**
- **The delegates hand out presents**



# Austria: The artichoke: from a sign of wealth to medicinal plant of the year

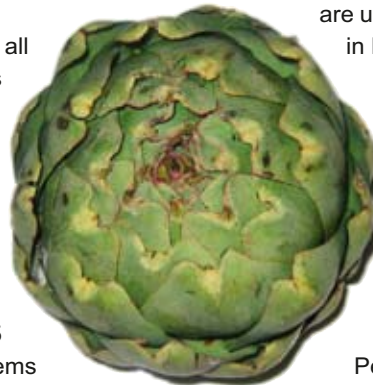
Dr. Gerhard Bedian

The artichoke (*Cynara cardunculus* or *Cynara scolymus*) is a strong thistle-like cultivar of the composite Asteraceae genus. The artichoke sub-genus is cultivated for its edible flowering buds; the leaf vegetable Cardy is also of the *Cynara cardunculus* genus.

The artichoke is in all respects similar to its wild ancestor, *Cynara cardunculus*. It is hardier: By the autumn of the first growing year it has formed a solid leaf formation and, for about five years, 0.5 to two meter high stems will form with flowering buds. The pinnatisect leaves with two or three indents can be up to 80 cms long and 40 cms wide; the undersides of the leaves are grey and coated with fine hairs.

The cup-shaped inflorescences are the part of the plant that is harvested. In contrast to forms of the plant growing in the wild the inflorescences are larger. As budding takes place earlier several harvests are possible in the same year. The base

of the inflorescences is fleshy. In the case of cultivated forms the lower fleshy involucral bracts are hardly spiny. If the inflorescences are not harvested, violet tubular florets form. Two to eight millimetre long achenes are formed with a pappus consisting of feathery bristles that are up to 3.5 centimetres in length.



The frost-sensitive artichoke originates from the Mediterranean area, spreading from the Eastern Mediterranean (Turkey and Persia)

to North Africa, westward to Spain and the Canary Islands. The artichoke is first mentioned by Pliny and Columella, yet classification of the plants mentioned there is not free from doubt. Thus, the ancient Greek „scolymos“, a reference to the spines, may have been used to designate other kinds of thistle. The artichoke appears to have been first cultivated in the first century A. D.

The Arabs were responsible for

spreading the artichoke in the Southern Mediterranean area. The Spanish word „alcachofa“ is derived from the Arabic term „al-harschuf“, whilst the German term refers back to the Late Latin word „Articocalus“, or „Articiocco“.

After the cultivar was imported from Sicily at the beginning of the 15th century by the Neapolitan trader Filippo Strozzi, it began to conquer France and Great Britain and some 400 years later was also imported into the USA.

In Europe artichokes were first valued as a gourmet food in Italy. In 1466 cuttings from artichokes grown in Naples were already being supplied to Florence and Venice.

Shortly thereafter, they began to be cultivated in Spain and France. In 1548 artichokes were cultivated for the first time in England. Germany became acquainted with them around the middle of the 17th century. By the time of the French Revolution artichokes cultivated in the gardens of the French landed nobility became a sign of wealth and indicative of an elegant way of life. Artichokes

are also depicted in paintings from the Renaissance, e. g. by Vincenzo Campi (1536-1591) or Giuseppe Archimboldo (1527 – 1593).

The fact that cultivated artichokes begin to appear at precisely the same time in Spanish and Italian paintings, may be accounted for by the dominance of Spain over Italy from the middle of the 16th century until the beginning of the 18th century. It is interesting to note that in all European countries the genus name of the cultivated artichoke comes from the Latin „carduus“, meaning spiny.

After the 18th century the artichoke as a vegetable fell into oblivion.

The cultivar was newly discovered in France around the year 1925.

The main areas of cultivation today are the USA, Italy, Spain, Egypt, Argentina and France. In the garden the plant requires around 1m<sup>2</sup> space and prefers warm, sunny areas. The fist-size edible buds are harvested when still closed and the outer scales are beginning to part from them. If they are not harvested at this time, the plant will go on to carry a large violet flower.

Only the lower fleshy part of the scaly leaves and the base or heart of the bud are edible. The fine hairs under the leaves are not suitable for eating. The taste of the artichoke is tart to (mildly) bitter. Artichokes are cooked for 20 to 30 minutes in salt water with lemon juice. The leaves are then plucked off and the lower fleshy part drawn off with the teeth. Artichoke bottoms may also be preserved.

Since 1953 artichokes, with added herbs, have been made in Padua into a dark brown aperitif under the name of Cynar. Artichokes are said to stimulate the appetite, improve digestion and reduce cholesterol. The bitter ingredient Cynarin stimulates the metabolism of liver and gall bladder. Apart from being used as a vegetable, the leaves of the artichoke are used in juices, teas, dry extracts and tinctures. Their medicinal and dietetic effects are attributed to the special flavonoids and quinic acid compounds.

The artichoke was chosen in 2003 as the medicinal plant of the year.

Article published in the Austrian review – Kleingärtner: No 4/2008“



# Denmark: Study Session

organised by the Nordisk Kolonihaveforbund  
Copenhagen-Oslo, September 2007 1st part

Dr Richard Wiltshire, School of Social Science and Public Policy, King's College London

**Summary of the five presentations – and the way forward for the study groups**

In my School at King's College we have a renowned Department of War Studies, and my colleagues in that Department tell me that the first rule of military strategy is this: "know the enemy". In the first presentation Poul Nyrup Rasmussen made it clear to the study session that the European Social Democrats are no enemy of allotment gardens; on the contrary, "we need your values to combat individualism leading to egoism". The-

events in the Danish Supreme Court neither the perceived values of allotments nor the inevitability of political support even from the movement's natural friends can be taken for granted. The underlying message is that we have to make it easy for politicians to support allotments, and to do that we need to understand their priorities, the competing claims on their time, and the reality that there are plenty of other good causes to back. At worst, if we don't make the right arguments even sympathetic politicians may find it difficult to stay loyal to the allotments movement. For example, one

the protection for allotments. While support for allotments is widespread amongst politicians, we should be aware that it may also be uncomfortably shallow.

Mr Rasmussen captured the key value of the allotment garden movement with the word "community" – looking after one another - and he was echoed by Mr Schmidt, who stressed "freedom and community". The Danish Supreme Court case demonstrates, however, that there can be an underlying contradiction between freedom and community; allotments are not always the harmonious and inclusive places we might wish them to be. More seriously, allotment gardening is not the only activity that claims "community" as its own, and ours is not necessarily the easiest claim to support, when others can deliver the same values without need of land that is increasingly sought for purposes other than gardening. To deliver "community" is therefore not enough: the allotments movement must have arguments to show that these communities (and the spaces they occupy) are worthwhile and should be defended for other reasons, if we are to compete successfully with alternative claims on political support. Mr Rasmussen lamented the detachment of youth from communities and saw allotments as a place where bridges can be built between generations, echoing the experiences many in the allotments movement had in their own childhood, now fondly remembered.



*The delegates at work*

re was a less reassuring subtext, however, which was that politicians can't be particularly good friends of allotments either without the allotments movement's help. As the third presentation by Hans Christian Schmidt demonstrated, in the light of

of the "dark sides of globalisation" to which Mr Rasmussen referred is its impact on land prices and the knock-on effects on the cost of providing social housing for those on low incomes – a pressure against which it is hard to sustain the case to strengthen

But times move on: in the age of the internet and the mobile phone young people have the tools all around them to build vibrant communities of their own, spanning all the friends they've



**Dr. Richard WILTSHIRE**

ever had (and friends they've yet to meet), and not even the allotment is sacrosanct: the ability to plant virtual crops and measure their growth in cyberspace has already arrived. Out in real space, our arguments for gardening communities have to move with the times as well.

The study session enjoyed three other excellent presentations. Leif Thorin gave a model demonstration (based on Swedish experience) of how the allotments movement can work with national governments and other sympathetic partners to promote allotments effectively both to the public and to politicians, a presentation full of practical ideas for participants to take home and try out in their own national contexts. Mikael Baden drew on the Danish experience and his own professional background to show how arguments for allotments can be refined and projected to maximum effect in working with politicians and the media, using tools that can be effective at local, national and European levels. And Jan Olsson mapped out the key areas of policy concern within the European Union, along with the institutions with which the allotments movement needs to engage if it is to be effective at that level.

What was missing, however, in the gap between Leif Thorin's demonstration of successful national action and Jan Olsson's map of key Euro-

pean priorities, was a strategy for linking the two, to translate good national practice into effective European practice. Bridging that gap would be the task set for the study session's study groups.

The premise underpinning the work of the study groups was that the allotments movement has traditionally (and understandably) concentrated its finite energy on promoting allotments at the local and national levels, so this is where its capacity to make a difference is concentrated – with little energy or capacity left to support additional work at the supra-national level. It makes sense, therefore, to build on things that national federations do well and do anyway, and add value to their efforts by projecting the value of their work upwards to the European level, with little additional effort.

The approach, however, must be selective. Jan Olsson's key point had been that allotments must seek greater recognition at the European level, but recognition requires more than simply telling the story of what you do well: people must be willing to listen, to see the value of what the allotments movement delivers, and for that to happen the story must address other people's concerns – the key European policy issues of the day. Jan had identified these as globalisation, demography, climate change and governance, and the study groups were invited to consider each of these in turn, and come up with answers to the following questions:

- In which (if any) of these issues (or specific aspects of them) are particular national federations strong (or could become so), and would choose to concentrate their energies even without the European dimension?
- What are the examples that national federations would draw on to prove they (and their members) can address these issues effectively, and that would impress European policy-makers who might not otherwise consider engaging

with allotments?

- What, in a few words (bearing in mind Mikael Baden's advice), are the key messages that capture the ability of allotments to make a distinctive contribution to resolving these four policy issues, the messages that should be at the centre of the movement's lobbying activity at the European level?

To be followed



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# A fragile friendship

Konstantin Ananitchev, Institute for Urban-Planning, Main Department for Architecture and Urban Planning of Moscow Region



***The tremendous size of the country a.o. favoured the illusion that the resources were inexhaustible.***

In classical drama, comedy requires for a happy end while tragedy stipulates the death of the main character. However, Anton Chekhov's remark indicates *The Cherry Orchard* as a comedy. Yes, it is the saddest comedy ever written in Russian: all its personages remain alive and feel quite happy but the lovely Orchard (the title character!) dies. Dedicated solely to human relations, Chekhov's play was a landmark in Russian literature: nature was no longer just a static background, but a reliable and trustful friend vulnerable to betrayal.

Much has been said about the impact natural environment has on national culture. In Russia, one could find explicit examples of this impact. From the point of view of a spatial planner, even the location and design of Russian historical cities reflect the specific properties of Russian landscape: spaciousness, gently sloping topography, rich vegetation. As a rule, a com-

munity emerged on the hillside facing the confluence of two rivers and then grew like an unwinding spiral.

Abundance of wood resulted in prevalence of timber construction, while spaciousness favored low-density urban development less vulnerable to fires. Stone construction was not so common; insufficient supply resulted in the rule that only the most vital urban services should enjoy the benefits of stone walls, namely: defense and religion. The Citadel, or Kremlin, was more an Acropolis of the ancient world, than a sovereign's stronghold of Western Europe. Being the best protected parts of settlements, Krem-lins hosted cathedrals and accumulated pieces of material culture. Timber predominated in civil construction until the time of Peter the Great. Unfortunately, wood is not durable material, which is why it is useless to go to Russia in search of an "undisturbed" medieval town like Carcassonne in

France or Bergamo in Italy.

## No antagonistic contradictions

Until the Industrial Revolution, there were no antagonistic contradictions between urban and rural ways of life, as urban dwellers and their rural compatriots had similar opportunities for private constructions, agriculture and recreation. Moreover, relatively small centre-periphery distances in urban communities did not prevent citizens from direct contacts with native landscape sufficiently to provide for creative inspiration which then materialized into literature, folklore, fine arts and handicrafts.

Speaking about the people of Russia, it is appropriate to mention that, from the very beginning of its history, Russia has been a multinational and thus a multicultural state. Each nation is characterized by its own attitude towards nature and landscape, its own

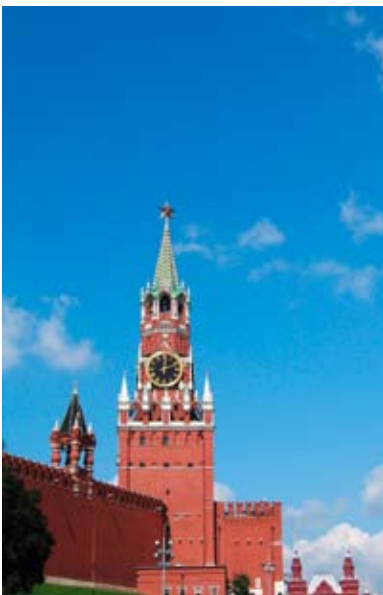




**Characteristics of the national landscape: spaciousness**

unique approach to them. Even in a new place, in different natural surroundings, people look for opportunities to use their traditional skills and thus search for their own niche. Centuries of living in the neighbourhood taught our ancestors mutual respect

and tolerance. Apart from economic symbiosis, cultural exchange considerably enriched all participants. In Russia, the conglomerate of various national cultures and traditions could be found everywhere: from loan words to the art of cookery.

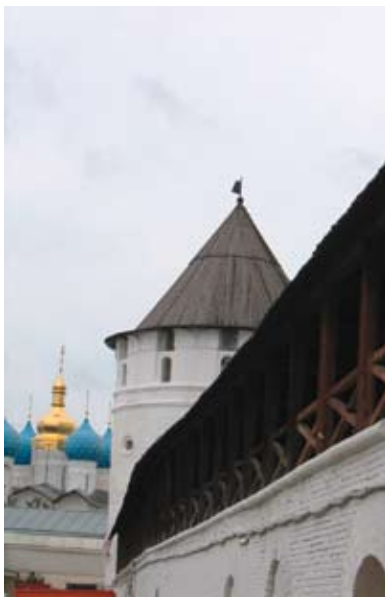


**Kremlin in Moscow**

The situation began to change in the nineteenth century, when the demand for a highly concentrated labour force resulted in intensive urbanization. Right angles and circles, though ideal in planning and design, appeared to deprive communities of their traditional individuality. At the very start of that process, Russia's leading novelists pointed to the definite correlation between broken ties between people and nature on the one hand, and dehumanization and degradation of culture on the other. Those who know the Russian literature of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries can easily find that gloomy mood in the novels by Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky. The Revolution of 1917 aggravated the trend: the state poli-

cy of rapid industrialization combined with elimination of individual farming led to depopulation of rural areas and excess concentration of people in a few industrial, newly built or reshaped agglomerations. For several decades, nature was treated like a treasury "destined to serve the people". Unfortunately, the tremendous size of the country and abundance of natural riches supported the illusion of inexhaustibility. It would be unjust to deny numerous nature-protecting measures undertaken during the Soviet period of our history: creation of national parks and wildlife reserves, legal penalties for environmental pollution, use of waste, etc. However, on a mass scale, "economic interests" predominated.

A similar attitude towards the historical heritage resulted in intended or unpremeditated destruction and abandonment of old religious and civil buildings, estates and even communities, careless intrusions into historical landscapes, loss of traditional arts and handicrafts.



**Kremlin in Kazan with cathedral**



**As a rule a community emerged on the hillside**



**Private construction in a rural area**



**Intensive urbanisation in the 19th century when the demand for concentrated labour increased significantly**

**Changing situation**

Now the situation changes, the right to property inevitably requires responsibility and thus – action. The revival of individual constructions, especially in the countryside and new architectural solutions, developed recently in Moscow and several other cities, prove that Russians have saved their

cultural tradition and in particular, their traditional taste for nature. However, we are still far from a successful solution of ecological problems, from a healthy environment that could support a level of culture, sufficient, in its turn, to provide for efficient protection of common heritage. The practical task for today is to restore direct public access to genuine natural and cultural values. This cannot be achieved through insulated isles of undisturbed nature and well-guarded museums only. Environmental protection shall become a feature of everyday life. At present, Russia is among the most urbanized nations with 73% of its citizens living in cities. Evidently, urbanization is irreversible and it is useless to mourn for the “wooden Russia” of the past. But that does not mean that access to natural beauty no longer exists. European experience has proved that even in most industrialized regions people can enjoy a healthy environment. The decisive step to be made now is to turn from individual, private action to public. In this connection, the recently proclaimed reform of local self-government is destined to optimize the size of municipalities and make them more attached to specific local problems, enhance public representation in local legislative bodies and thus raise their prestige and response.

The practical aspects need co-ordinated action. Needless to say the role of spatial planners will increase dramatically. The principal precondition for successful environment-friendly spatial development is the humanist imperative: nature is your friend, and friends shall not be betrayed.

In Russia, novelists, painters and composers have been always aware of the fragile ties between man and nature. They know how to contribute to nature protection today. Spatial planners should be grateful for their advice.

**Article published in the review NATUROPA 102/204**



*The atmosphere is oppressive.....*

## And now, Mr Mayor, it's your turn...

Riccardo Priore.

Head of the Institutional Committee Secretariat



*Despite the time of day the town-centre streets are deserted.....*

It's just past eight in the morning when the mayor enters his office frowning. A new file is waiting for him on his desk: "The European Landscape Convention: application of the general principles, strategies and guidelines for the adoption of specific measures aimed at protecting, managing and planning local landscapes".

A few minutes later he starts up from his chair, calls his secretary on the intercom and says he's not to be disturbed. He opens the file and starts reading it with great care and attention. On the front cover he recognises

the stamp of a national ministry and just below the stamp the word "Important". For goodness sake, let's hope this isn't yet another central government invention sent to test me, he says to himself.

He tries to imagine what the real message of such a weighty document might be. Apart from the usual bureaucratic terms, the word that constantly crops up throughout is landscape. The mayor is sceptical; he doesn't believe that the landscape can possibly be the main theme of a ministerial document of this type.



***The architectural heritage has been highlighted (Péruges, France)***

He goes on reading. With a little bit of patience, he'll surely find out what it's really all about. No, beyond a shadow of doubt, the text, which is direct and precise, is entirely devoted to the landscape, from beginning to end.

He anxiously calls his secretary and asks her if she's sure the document was addressed to him. Has there not been a mistake? Perhaps it was intended for the mayor in the neighbouring municipality? The secretary can't help, so he decides to phone the ministry and asks to speak to the Minister himself. A few minutes later he is put through to the Minister, who tells him he knows exactly what document he's talking about: it is, indeed, devoted solely to the landscape and has been sent to all the mayors in the country. He has no further comment to make. Our mayor thanks him but is still in the dark. He still doesn't understand how this document can be of use to his municipality.



***The historic center has been newly refurbished. (Old Lyon: the „Traboules“)***

He decides to go for a run in his car to try and get his thoughts in order. Despite the time of day (it's already ten o'clock) the town-centre streets are deserted. Only a few discontented-looking people are to be seen, hurrying to and fro between the new tower blocks under construction. The atmosphere is oppressive. The shop signs only make the surroundings look anonymous and unattractive.

#### **The importance of landscape**

The mayor drives on in a bad mood. He leaves the town behind him and drives towards the neighbouring municipality. The difference is striking. The historic centre has been newly refurbished and the town's architectural heritage has been highlighted. The viewpoint on the square in the upper part of the town offers a harmonious view of the surrounding hills. The inhabitants of the town look contented and are often to be seen helping foreign tourists attracted by the beauty of the site, its traditional crafts and gastronomy.

The mayor drives downheartedly back to his own municipality. Aware



***The mayor is determinate to take the necessary steps to insure that the local landscape will help to improve the living environment of the citizens (view in Palma)***

of his duties as the town's principal administrator and his responsibilities towards his fellow citizens, he picks up his phone to call the mayor in the neighbouring municipality and discreetly ask for his advice. They agree to meet and he sets off once more, taking the ministerial document on the landscape with him; you never know...

His colleague confirms the importance of the document. Our mayor is dumbfounded. They start going through it together. His initial distrust slowly begins to abate. He listens to his explanations with a mixture of curiosity and reticence. However, his interest grows as he gradually realises how important landscape is for the development of the local economy.

When the subject of public awareness of landscape and its value is broached, his interest mounts and

he starts taking notes. When his colleague starts talking about the need to educate the public on these issues, he asks very detailed questions and constantly interrupts him to ask for further information and explanations on how to identify landscapes, and analyse their characteristics and the forces and pressures transforming them and about the importance of taking note of these changes.

At the end of the meeting, he insists that his colleague agrees to see him again for a more detailed discussion on how to assess the landscapes thus identified, taking into account the particular values assigned to them by the interested parties and the population concerned.

#### **And now?**

Returning home, he feels a strong desire to act. He thinks about what he has just learned and about his re-

sponsibilities as mayor and decides that he must define landscape quality objectives for the landscapes identified and assessed, after public consultation. Once this has been done, he will introduce instruments aimed at protecting, managing and/or planning the landscape in his municipality.

Rounding a corner, he sees, bathed in the evening sunlight, the outline of the part of town which has not been disfigured by the property developers working nearby. Proud to live in such a beautiful area, our mayor is determined to take the necessary steps to ensure that the local landscape will, in future, like all other local resources, help to improve the living environment of his fellow citizens.

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# The environment, the economy and public health – an integrated view

David Gee and David Stanners,  
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*The environment is central to the health of people and their economies  
(Town of Sineu on the isle of Palma)*

The environment is central to the health of people and their economies. Just as a foetus is totally dependent on the life-support system of the mother during her pregnancy, so the health and vitality of people and their economies are totally dependent on their environments. Unfortunately, many people do not see it that way. They either see the environment as dependent on the economy – such as the politician who says: “let’s make the economy strong, then we’ll fix the environment when we can afford it” - or they see little connection between health and the environment, whether they are “deep greens” campaigning on ecological issues or doctors treating

individual patients and individual illnesses. Whether we are politicians, greens or doctors, is there not a more efficient way to fulfill our aims? For this, a broader perspective is essential.

All economies are sub-systems of the larger environmental system which provides the:

- sources of energy and materials;
- sinks for pollution and other wastes;
- services of water, nutrients and carbon recycling;
- space for living, working and aesthetics (a walk in the woods and the song of a bird).

Neglect of this life-support system of the “4 S’s” leads to weaker or defunct economies as vegetation, food, soils, water or air become contaminated or exhausted and gradually fail to support economic activity. This is dramatically illustrated in the Aral Sea region, or the collapsed Canadian salmon fishing communities.

#### Indirect social costs

Less catastrophic but still costly is where economic damage is caused by pesticides and nutrient contamination of groundwater, involving millions of Euros in water treatment. This is a social cost to the economy that the agricultural sector does not include



***If upland forests are preserved because they are seen to be cheaper and more effective water regulators than dams then upland biodiversity benefits anyway. (Mountain forest in Switzerland)***

in the price of its food: an economic distortion that reduces the real wealth of society via false price signals that encourage the over-use of pesticides and fertilisers: Similarly, the “external” costs on society of road-transport-induced accidents, noise, respiratory and circulatory diseases and congestion amount to around 4% a year of the EU GDP but these costs are not borne by transport users, which means that transport is encouraged beyond the level that is economic for society as a whole. By internalising these externalities via taxes and other means, the market prices for transport would become fairer and more efficient. Currently only about 30% of transport externalities are covered by transport taxes. But if the health of an economy is independent on the health of its environment, what about the health of its people?

Without access to the basics of clean water, shelter, fresh air and food, people obviously suffer. Even in more

developed economies where the link

between everyday life and the environment is not so visible, the role of environmental factors in disease and well-being is significant. Most of the major diseases of Europe, such as heart disease, cancer, respiratory diseases and allergies have an environmental as well as a genetic component within a multi-factorial chain of causation. And while each environmental factor may be small, if the links in the chain of causation are inter-dependent, as they often appear to be, then removing even a small link can break the chain.

#### **Environmental factors**

Take asthma in children, for example. There seem to be many causes, from a child’s genetic inheritance to its nutritional status, which in turn help determine how it reacts to the many environmental factors, both indoor (such as mites, pets, damp, environmental tobacco smoke, nitrogen oxides) and outdoor (such as pollen and pollution from industry and traffic), that have been implicated in asthma causation. Therefore it is clear that

diagnoses of asthma and many other diseases should systematically embrace environmental factors. This will be a significant challenge for doctors whose time is scarce and whose training is not usually appropriate.

This multi-causal chain will vary in its exact make-up from child to child, but for children overall, even if the environmental factors such as damp housing or traffic fumes may be less important than, say, genetic make-up or nutritional status, the environmental factors may be the ones that can be most cost-effectively removed, thus breaking the causal chain. And, as with many environmental issues, there are secondary benefits of action, such as less noise or fewer accidents from traffic reduction, or energy savings from dry houses, which further justify the environmental actions even where exact causations are not well understood.

The environmental causes of disease and ill health are a controversial and ill understood area of science and



**Currently only about 30 % of transport externalities are covered by transport taxes. (Traffic in London)**



**A shared systems approach with integrated programmes will build partnerships for progress. (Allotment garden site in Oslo)**

opinions vary about their significance. Some say that, for Western Europe, perhaps 2-3% of public disease and ill-health is determined by known environmental factors but others maintain that it must be far more significant. They point to the sharp increases over the last two or three decades in asthma, allergies, and cancers (particularly of the reproductive organs such as breast and testicles) and related ill-health such as sperm count decline, which cannot be explained by genetic causes.

They also observe that the large differences in health between the socio-economic classes cannot be explained without involving significant environmental causation.

It is thought that the ubiquitous presence of low doses of mixtures of chemicals in food, drink, air, consumer products and the general environment are playing some role in public ill health, even if the evidence for this is far from substantial (EEA and UNEP study, 1998).

#### Impact on public health

But what about environmental programmes and campaigns being little concerned with health? Well, history so far shows that the environment only gets serious attention, when it is seen to be damaging either the economy or public health. Yet because "everything connects" and "socio-environment" systems, action to stop infectious diseases from water contamination, or to reduce skin cancer from ozone depletion, leads to a better environment for all species. And if upland forests are preserved because they are seen to be cheaper and more effective water regulators (which reduce the risk of lowland flooding) than dams, then upland biodiversity benefits anyway, even if it was last in the queue for political attention.

Although public health may be seen by some as only a small part of "the environment", much environmental progress depends upon the political weight of the health impacts. For example, the cost benefit exercise on the current UN/ECE multi-pollutant/effect programme on acidification, eutrophication and low-level ozone shows that it is the benefits to human health, not eco-system damage, that provide the main economic justification for further reductions in SO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub> and NH<sub>3</sub> in Europe. Ecologists need the language of public health in order to maximise political support for the environment.

So, it is out of our specialist "boxes" of economics, health and ecology, and into a shared systems approach, with integrated programmes that build partnerships for progress.

Welcome London'99, the WHO conference that will bring these three worlds together!

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