

## **A political success**

### **Allotment garden sites in the Federal Nature Conservation Act**

The amendment to the Federal Nature Conservation Act came into force on 1 March 2022. The efforts of the Federation of German Allotment Gardeners and the regional federations as well as other supporters have paid off. The amendment to the law makes clear the great importance attached to allotment garden sites for the protection of nature and the maintenance of the landscape. According to § 1 (6) BNatSchG, in addition to other open spaces in the "settled and near-settled area", allotment garden sites are now to be "preserved and, where they do not exist in sufficient quantity and quality, to be newly created or developed".

#### **What does this mean for the protection of allotment garden areas?**

Thanks to the new legislation, allotment gardens get a boost, for example, when it comes to drawing up urban land use plans, because according to the building code, the interests of environmental protection and nature conservation have to be taken into account. This is a great success. At the same time, however, in individual cases it will have to be weighed up legally to what extent individual allotment gardens should be



preserved, especially in comparison with other open spaces worthy of protection. It is up to all of us to ensure that an allotment garden site stands up to critical scrutiny.

As the representative of a good 900,000 allotment gardeners throughout Germany, the BDG never tires of making it clear at federal level how allotment gardens to this day combine the concerns of environmental protection, nature conservation and health protection as well as environmental justice, integration and education like hardly any other use of green space.

Allotment gardening in the sense of ecological or near-natural garden management shows how nature conservation and growing one's own fruit and vegetables are compatible. There are many good examples of nature conservation in allotment garden associations throughout Germany, as shown by certifications and allotment garden competitions, including the federal competition "Gardens in Urban Development", which will be held for the 25th time in 2022. Education and expert advice, cooperative partnerships with local authorities, schools, nature conservation organisations and other social groups and, last but not least, the political representation of the allotment garden movement on the part of the federations are also essential.

We make the added value of our allotment gardens for society and the protection of biodiversity, especially the diversity of cultivated plants, visible to all. The new federal law for the protection of nature thus offers us a great opportunity when it comes to the future protection and development of allotment garden sites!

**Eva Foos, BDG**

***Pictures: T. Wagner***