Special Exhibition on the Federal Competition: “Allotment Garden Summer: Cool and Together Rather Than Hot and Lonely”

Since August 2024, our Federal Centre has housed the permanent exhibition City | Nature | People – Small Gardens, Big Impact, alongside a programme of changing special exhibitions. A special exhibition is now planned to present the results of the federal competition “Gardens in Urban Development”, held this year under the motto “Allotment Garden Summer: Cool and Together Rather Than Hot and Lonely”. This gives the BKD every reason to showcase the individual strengths of the 19 allotment garden associations that reached the final selection. The aim of the special exhibition is to learn from these award-winning associations.

The federal competition, launched in 1951 and now held for the 26th time, is regarded as Germany’s most important award for innovative allotment garden associations and exemplary allotment garden sites. All of this will be featured in the special exhibition, which opens to visitors on 14 November 2026, the day on which the 19 associations receive their awards in Berlin. The criteria that were decisive in the federal competition also form the basis of the special exhibition.

The special exhibition will show how allotment gardeners make a substantial contribution to quality of life in our towns and cities. They promote biodiversity and climate protection, create spaces where people can meet, and thus strengthen connections with nature and social cohesion in urban neighbourhoods. With innovative ideas and projects, they are also addressing the challenges of the future.

These were the questions the seven-member jury wanted to explore in greater detail: How do the 19 nominated allotment garden associations promote biodiversity? How are they responding to climate change? How do they open themselves up to the surrounding neighbourhoods? What initiatives do they launch? The answers highlighted the special potential of allotment gardens: as green oases amid the noise of the city, as places for learning about urban nature and bringing people together, and as starting points and powerful drivers of sustainable, nature-friendly urban development.

Naturally, the special exhibition will be of interest not only to the 19 allotment garden associations featured, but also to the allotment gardening movement throughout Germany. For many associations, it may provide another reason to travel to Berlin and visit this special exhibition as well as the permanent exhibition.

One particularly appealing, informative and cost-effective option is to combine the trip with a visit to the German Bundestag. The BKD has already provided information about this, but here is a reminder of the basic procedure: allotment garden associations (as well as city and regional federations) can visit their local members of the Bundestag in Berlin. The Federal Press Office (BPA) covers almost all the costs. To arrange this, associations need to contact their local MPs. It is best to approach all local MPs and travel to Berlin with whichever member is the first to agree; this also helps avoid possible political controversy.

A visit to the Bundestag and a government ministry is compulsory on these trips. However, allotment garden associations can also express their own preferences about what they would like to visit on BPA-sponsored trips. If requested, the Federal Centre of the allotment garden associations can expressly be included in the Berlin itinerary. These visits to Berlin are valuable not only for the wealth of new information they provide; experience shows that they also strengthen cohesion within the participating allotment garden associations.

Thomas Stölting, BKD

Graphic: BKD



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