

Words at the end of 2025

Dear allotment garden family!

As I write these lines, I am filled with a feeling of gratitude and pride - gratitude for what we have achieved together as an international allotment garden family over the past year and pride in the strength that lies within our community.

The year 2025 was characterised by challenges, but also by beautiful moments that have shown how valuable our commitment to the allotment garden movement is.



When I look back on the past few months, I see one thing above all: the diversity and vibrancy of our gardens are reflected in the diversity and vibrancy of our community. We have celebrated anniversaries, initiated new projects and deepened existing friendships. In particular, the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Swiss allotment garden federation impressively demonstrated how deeply rooted the allotment garden movement is in our towns and hearts. It fills me with joy that we were able to celebrate this event together and experience how much we are united by a common goal: The preservation and further development of our green oases in the midst of a constantly changing world.

Because our allotment gardens are far more than just places to grow fruit and vegetables. They are refuges for animals and plants, green lungs of the cities, places for recreation and encounters. At a time when climate change, urbanisation and social change are presenting us with new challenges, our gardens make an invaluable contribution to the environment, climate and quality of life.

What makes our movement so special is the way we live together. Our associations bring together people from a wide range of backgrounds, age groups and life stories. Experiences are exchanged at the garden fence, tips are passed on, harvests are shared and we celebrate together. Especially at a time when many people are longing for a sense of belonging and genuine neighbourliness, our allotment gardens offer a place where community is not just a word, but a living reality. The solidarity that can be felt on our sites gives strength and confidence - and it is a model for social coexistence far beyond the garden gates.

Our allotment gardens are places where sustainability is practised on a daily basis. We pay attention to the careful use of resources, promote biodiversity through near-natural planting and do not use pesticides. Many of us create compost heaps, collect rainwater, cultivate old fruit varieties and create habitats for insects and birds. Scientific studies show that allotment gardens are hotspots of biodiversity. Every flower strip, every orchard, every herb bed in our gardens is a contribution to the preservation of biodiversity. In many cities, allotment gardens are often the last refuges for endangered species. They are living examples of how sustainable cultivation and love of nature can go hand in hand.

The health value of our gardens should not be underestimated either. Exercising in the fresh air, experiencing nature and doing things together promote not only physical but also mental

health. Studies show that regular gardening reduces stress, increases well-being and can even reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. Especially in our fast-paced world, our gardens offer a balance that is good for body and soul. We know how beneficial it is to relax in green spaces after a busy day.

Another central theme this year was the passing on of knowledge and traditions. We have been cultivating our gardens for over 100 years and have gathered a wealth of experience in the process. We pass on this knowledge of growing, harvesting and preserving food to our children and grandchildren - a value that is priceless, especially in times of crisis. This year's study session in Tulln focussed intensively on the topic of "Being prepared for crises" and showed how important our gardens are for the security of supply and the resilience of our society.

We were also able to intensify our joint work at two meetings in 2025. At the General Assembly in Luxembourg and the study session in Tulln, the enthusiasm with which everyone is working to further develop our ideas and goals was once again evident. With a voice representing over two million allotment garden families, we have the opportunity to make ourselves heard by political decision-makers at national and European level - an opportunity that we must utilise even more in the future.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who put their heart and soul into our movement - be it in their own garden, in their association, at national or international level. It is you who keep our community alive, who contribute new ideas and preserve traditions. Without your commitment, your creativity and your willingness to take on responsibility, none of this would be possible. You are the heart of our movement.

As this year draws to a close, I would like to encourage you all to continue to work with confidence, vigour and joy on the development of our allotment gardens. Let us work together to ensure that our gardens remain places of diversity, sustainability and togetherness in the future. Let us be proud of what we have achieved and courageously take on the challenges that lie ahead. Together, we can achieve a great deal - for our cities, our environment and our society.

I wish you and your loved ones a relaxing festive season and all the best and good health for the new year 2026. May it be a year full of joy, community and shared successes!

With best regards
Sylvia Wohatschek
Secretary General
Fédération Internationale des Jardins Familiaux