



# Hyphen 46

Office International du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux  
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# Why have a “Garden Day”?

Achim Friedrich,  
Dr. Agr. President of the BDG



**DR. SC. AGR. ACHIM FRIEDRICH**

“Is such a day really necessary?” is a legitimate question to ask. In truth, it is not about gardens in general, but specifically about allotment gardens.

The survival of allotment gardens, born from the industrialisation and urbanisation of European towns and cities cannot be taken for granted. Originally designed for the poorest people, allotment gardens were first located on leased land at the edge of towns. However, due to their key role in society, a good number of them have maintained their original site. By integrating themselves into the town structure, they form today part of the infrastructure and contribute greatly to the quality of life in these towns. They take on more and more social, ecological and town-planning functions. The allotments have become an indispensable part of a social city model which has undeniably become the development model to which all European cities aspire. Today allotment gardens are an undeniable pillar in urban gardening culture.

However, in spite of their essential or even indispensable functions, their long-term survival is not guaranteed. These areas are always at the centre of town-planning tensions. The constant search for building sites never ceases to threaten the existence of allotment gardens.

In order to remind everyone of the importance of allotment gardens, the gardeners organise a “Garden Day”, generally one of the first weekends in June. Allotment garden associations at all levels use this occasion to organise a day of action in collaboration with local politicians and councils and the media. This allows them to inform the public and make them more aware of the issues surrounding allotment gardens.

For the gardeners themselves, this day is equally important as it has as both an internal and external focus. It is the chance to open up to the public and show them the attractions of these gardens. You can go there and take part in all sorts of activities, as much for children as for adults. It is not only about the aesthetic side of the gardens. It goes much further than just their simple management, encompassing educational and training gardens, nature trails, contributions to the enrichment of species, health, maintaining biodiversity and a better urban environment. In fact, this day is a kind of exhibition, a real publicity event.

And to no lesser extent, an action day like this also reinforces awareness of allotment gardens. It is all about getting a message through to the public: “We, the allotment gardeners, want to keep our gardens in their original sites!” They belong in the towns themselves and not on their outskirts. We are not an exclusive club. We defend the motto of “Green spaces for everyone”. Our initiatives go far beyond using allotments for private use. Our allotment sites aim to improve the quality of life in modern towns.

In future shouldn't we rename this day as “Day of the allotment gardener”?

This name would certainly be more apt.

# Decision protocol of the general assembly held in Bremen on June 11th, 2010

Were represented: the federations of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Great-Britain, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, and Switzerland.

Were absent: the federations of Finland, Norway, Sweden and Slovakia

- 1) The agenda is adopted with unanimity.
- 2) The reports of the general assembly held in Luxembourg are adopted with unanimity.
- 3) On proposal of the executive board the general assembly decides with unanimity to award the diploma on an ecological gardening to the allotment garden sites „Ons Buiten“ in Amsterdam (NL), „Eigen Arbeid“ in The Hague (NL), „Am Anger“ in Vienna (A), „KGV Wardamm-Woltmershausen,“ in Bremen (D).
- 4) It is decided to draft a regulation concerning the awarding of a diploma for social activities. This diploma will then be awarded in Birmingham to “Cold Barn Farm Allotments” for its social activities.
- 5) The subject on GMOs is discussed in great detail. It is unanimously decided not to work out a memorandum now, but instead to carefully monitor the evolution of this question.

It is decided with unanimity to organize a lecture on the new EU rules concerning plant protection during the next general assembly in Luxembourg. In this lecture one should also include the subject of the GMOs.

- 6) The delegates acknowledge the results of the French project concerning the revenue of an allotment garden.

It is agreed unanimously that this is an exclusive national study, which is only relevant in France. It is underlined that the results cannot be transposed to other federations and that they have no value in other countries.

The French federation is kindly asked to inform the Office on the methodology used for the study, the data on how the results have been calculated. The French federation should as well answer the specific questions of the federations.

- 7) W. WOHATSCHEK presents the model of the new Office flag and informs that the Austrian federation will offer this new flag to the Office as it had already done in 1955.

The delegates thank the Austrian federation very heartily for this nice gesture.

It is decided that the Office will order the missing banners with the names and dates of the congresses after 1980. These banners will be paid out of the reserve funds of the Office.

- 8) The federations are requested to send the missing amendments and the missing articles for the new information brochure to the Office. The fixed number of characters for the article has absolutely to be respected otherwise the layout will not fit anymore.

- 9) It is acknowledged that the German and the Swiss federations have sent in their innovative projects. The Dutch federation is kindly asked to better define the innovative character of the projects that should be presented by giving examples.

- 10) The federations are pressed to immediately send the missing inscriptions for the study session in Birmingham.

It is agreed that the German federation will present two and the Danish federation one innovative project in Birmingham.

# 100<sup>th</sup> Jubilee of the Bremen federation



**Jens BÖHRNSEN, mayor of Bremen, addressing the delegates**



**Participants of the academic session**



**President Ulrich HELMS welcomes the delegates**



**Achim FRIEDRICH presents his ideas at the occasion of the centennial**



**Malou WEIRICH addressing the delegates**



**Planting of a lime tree: From left to right: Hans Ulrich HELMS, President of the allotment garden federation in Bremen, Malou WEIRICH, secretary general of the International Office, Achim FRIEDRICH, President of the German allotment garden federation, Wilhelm WO-HATSCHEK, chairman of the executive board of the International Office, Christian WEBER, President of the Parliament Bremen**



**Musical entertainment**

# European Day of the Garden



**Preben JACOBSEN, president of the International Office, addressing the delegates**



**Awarding of the diplomas concerning an ecological gardening to the allotment garden sites :  
„Am Anger“ in Vienna  
„KGV Wardamm-Woltmershausen in Bremen  
„Ons Buiten“ in Amsterdam  
„Eigen Arbeid“ in Den Haag**



**Round table discussion**



**The delegates**



# Decision protocol of the general assembly held in Birmingham on August 26th, 2010

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

Were absent: the federations of Finland, Norway and Slovakia

- 1) P. JACOBSEN welcomes the delegates.
- 2) The agenda is adopted with unanimity.
- 3) The reports of the general assembly held in Bremen are adopted with unanimity.
- 4) After discussion and some amendments the draft regulation for the creation of a diploma for social activities carried out by allotment and leisure gardeners is adopted with unanimity. The text is joined as appendix to this report.
- 5) The affiliation fees for 2011 including the fixed adaptation of 2,5 % have been sent to the federations for information.
- 6) The federations of Great-Britain, Luxembourg, Sweden and Slovakia have not yet sent in their article for the brochure. Last deadline: November 1st.  
  
The federations of Great-Britain, Germany, Poland, Sweden, Slovakia and Denmark have not yet corrected their national data in the comparative scheme. Deadline: November 1st.
- 7) The general assembly to be held in Luxembourg on March 18th and 19th 2011 will exceptionally start on March 18th at 2.30 p.m.
- 8) E. KONDRACKI informs on the extent of the damages caused to the allotment gardeners in Poland by the floods.
- 9) C. ZIJDEVELD proposes to discuss the problems concerning the Office functioning and the increasing of its efficiency during the March meeting.  
  
The proposal is adopted with unanimity. The executive board will prepare this discussion
- 10) P. JACOBSEN presents the provisional programme for the international congress in Copenhagen. The provisional registration form should be returned to the Danish federation before September 5th, 2010.

W. WOHATSCHEK invites the federations to help the Polish allotment gardeners and so prove their solidarity.

A. FRIEDRICH informs on the damages caused by the floods in Saxony.

# Regulation for the creation of a diploma for social activities carried out by allotment and leisure gardeners

1) The International Office hereby creates an honorary diploma in accordance with the joined model aiming at encouraging and at rewarding the leisure garden associations/persons that organise a social activity in the area of allotment gardens.

2) The member federation presents the demand of the chosen association/actor whose project fits the rules that are described below to the general secretariat. The demand contains a description of the project, its motivation, as well as pictures illustrating the project. The demand should be sent to the general secretariat at least two months before the international meeting during which the diploma should be granted.

3) The criteria the choice by the member federations will be based on are the following :

3.1.: The activities can be as far reaching and varied as possible. Can be considered activities in the area with elderly people, children, disabled, unemployed people, immigrants and so on.

This enumeration is neither exhaustive nor limitative.

The project should have a certain

and visible effect on the society or part of the society.

The project has to be into operation and have given noticeable effects.

3.2.: The project can be executed facilitated or promoted by an association on local or regional level.

A federation can as well ask a diploma for an activity that is executed throughout the whole country.

4) The award will be handed out according to the following rules:

4.1.: A representative of the member federation officially gets the diploma from the president of the International Office with the mission to hand the diploma to the concerned association.

4.2.: A representative of the chosen project can also receive the diploma himself during the international meeting.

Adopted in Birmingham on August 26th, 2010

At the occasion of the study session in Birmingham the diploma was awarded for the first time.



***The Cold Barn Farm allotments (Great-Britain) received the diploma for their activities with young people.***





*Allotment gardens in England*

# Integration of the allotment gardens in urban planning: Great-Britain

In England and Wales, most allotment sites are provided by local councils as part of a legal duty to make provision where there is a demand for them.

Once a council has purchased or appropriated land specifically for allotment use it cannot be disposed of without Government consent and only when it can be proven that the land is no longer needed for allot-

ment purposes or where displaced plot holders can be provided with adequate plots elsewhere.

“The framework of land use in Britain is largely provided by the town and country planning system. This aims to secure the most efficient and effective use of land in the public interest.

Decisions on whether to allow pro-

posals to build on land or to change its use are made by local authorities. Development plans set out the authority’s policies and proposals for the development and use of land in their area. The development plan guides and informs day to day decisions as to whether or not planning permission should be granted. To ensure that these decisions are rational and consistent, they must be considered



*Allotment gardens in Wales*

against the development plan adopted by the authority.

Legislation (Section 54A Town and Country Planning Act 1990) requires that decisions made should accord with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Plans do not have to be rigidly adhered to, but they provide a firm basis for rational and consistent planning decisions. They give every-

one concerned with development a measure of certainty about what kind of development will, and will not, be permitted during the plan period”.

The designation of land for allotment purposes will not automatically give it protection as Government consent could always be given for disposal. Similarly, allocation of allotment land as suitable for development will not guarantee disposal. Even where a lo-

cal authority grants planning consent for allotment land to be developed, it cannot take place without specific consent from Government.

In looking at allotments being included in town planning in the UK, we are endeavouring to ensure that all future town plans include provision for allotments in advance, and in anticipation, of demand.



# Integration of the allotment gardens in urban planning: Germany

The German federation has prepared a brochure concerning legal protection for allotment garden sites as far as urban planning is concerned. The aim is to support allotment garden associations.

Urban planning is a task that is undertaken exclusively by the communes and is decided by law. According to paragraph 1 section 3 BauGB (law on

constructions) the communes have to work out planning schemes as soon and as far as it is necessary for local developments. The requirement concerns both the plan as such and the different single elements of it. If and to what extent urban planning is necessary has to be determined according to the essential needs of the community: For example a new plan is needed if additional allotment gar-

den sites are required when the existing plan does no more than meet existing demand.

There is no right to ask for the preparation of such urban planning schemes. The commune can also change, complete or abolish urban planning schemes if there is a need to change existing schemes.

The essential principle of the urban



planning is the request to weight the pros and cons. When establishing a plan, the authorities are obliged to weight the public and private interests according to their actual knowledge. They have to weight them both against each other and among themselves in a fair way.

It has to be mentioned that for the inclusion of allotment garden land in urban planning schemes it is a rule not only to consider the private interest of the allotment gardeners but also the public interest, because allotment gardens are part of the social and political function of our lives.

The detail of an urban planning scheme is normally started by the adoption of a specific policy. The pub-

lic has to be informed about it according to local rules. After the decision to prepare such a plan, the planners first design an informal plan. This plan is explained publicly and a procedure is in place so that citizens and allotment gardeners can have their input.

Allotment gardens which are owned by local authorities have the same legal protection as allotment gardens that are included in the urban planning schemes. According to a study made by the federal ministry for transport in 2008 one can say that throughout Germany 15 % of the allotment gardens are protected by urban planning schemes, 62 % are in the ownership of the local authorities which means that 77 % are protected by the planning laws.

Urban planning schemes are only reluctantly being prepared in the new Länder partly because it is a very costly procedure, partly because communes do not want to restrict themselves.

Therefore the German federation recommends a strategy in which the local authorities together with allotment garden associations work out in each town an allotment garden development plan (actual needs, future needs, development of the population, demands for allotment garden grounds) and we have had very good results from this strategy.

## Denmark: The allotment gardens of the future: Resume of the Danish study:

# Help us look into the future

Mogens Ginnerup-Nielsen, General Secretary –  
Kolonihaveforbundet for Danmark (Danish Allotment Garden Association)



In the members' bulletin Havebladet of the Allotment Garden Association of Denmark, we asked the following questions about allotment gardens in the autumn of 2008:

1. What will your garden look like in 10 years? - with a possibility to choose between four garden types, and
2. How do you think you will use the garden in 10 years?

The questions could be answered either by sending in a completed questionnaire by mail or over the internet

through the association's web page.

### The responses

Among the 40,000 members of the association, 300 sent in a response: Approximately 6% of the respondents expect to have a garden dominated by herbs and vegetables, about 16% a decorative garden with pots, almost 17% a traditional decorative garden with flowers and grass. Finally, about 35% expect to have a combination of these garden types.

The remaining approximately 25%

expect a "completely different garden". What they mean by this is described to a varying extent, see below.

### Age Breakdown

If you look at the age composition, there is a majority of members in the age group 56+ that expect to have a "vegetable garden" and a traditional decorative garden. However, age does not play any particular role when looking at who wants a "decorative garden with pots" and a garden that is a combination of the above garden types.

However, the younger age groups are - not surprisingly - over-represented among the ones expecting to have a "completely different garden".

### Geography

The differences in expectations are only affected by geography to a minor degree. However, the vegetable garden is more popular in the provinces, whereas "decorative garden with pots" has a somewhat stronger position in the Copenhagen area than in the rest of the country.

### Time of acquisition

Finally, if we look at the significance of the time of acquisition, there are significantly more with an expecta-



tion of a completely different garden among the most recently arrived allotment owners - 41 % of the ones who have purchased their garden after 1999 have this expectation. Only 20 % of the ones who have purchased their garden before 2000 expect to have a completely different garden in 10 years.

**The completely different garden**

There are many suggestions as to how these completely different gardens would be arranged and they have varying degrees of details. Roughly, they can be divided rather equally into three categories:

1. Gardens arranged for relaxa-

tion and togetherness with limited demands for maintenance – many emphasise an arrangement with room for children and play as a vital factor.

2. Gardens with emphasis on growing of fruit and vegetables, of which some are organic – many combined with flowers.

3. Gardens with an emphasis on nature and arranged with a variety of experiences – some with inspiration from foreign garden cultures, such as the Japanese.

Many responses include elements from several of these categories, and a recurring feature is the desire for variation and diversity - or as is

mentioned in some of the responses: "preferably a bit like a labyrinth" and a "recreational area with elements from all garden types".

**Summary**

To sum up, you could say that the survey shows that there is not only a lot of variation, but also a lot of inventiveness among allotment owners. Many of them have the desire to play and experiment with the arrangement of their garden.

Furthermore, many place emphasis on the garden being easy to cultivate and being a place where children and grandchildren can thrive and have fun.

# Austria: Climate change: The advantages and risks for gardens

Christine WEIDENWEBER

Our climate is changing rapidly, and this has long been evident. But what are the consequences of rising temperatures, violent storms, severe drought and torrential rain for gardens? In the book "Climate change – the advantages and risks for gardens", experts in meteorology, market gardening, plant protection and dendrology present their latest results and figures for the first time in this format. They provide clear explanations and practical advice on ways to combat parasites, choose plants and adapt to climate change in market gardening.

But how do you stay motivated to garden in these uncertain times? There is little sense in closing your eyes to the reality of climate change – much better is to take advantage of it by making sensible plans for new plants, irrigation and choosing plants according to where they grow best.

## The planet is heating up!

Professor Josef Eitzinger, agricultural meteorologist at the Meteorological Institute of the University of Soil Cultivation in Vienna has declared on the topic of climate change, that: "Central Europe is currently experiencing a clear rise in temperature. The latest regional climate scripts forecast a rise of up to 2.5 C by the year 2050 for the major agricultural production regions of Upper-Austria, Lower-Austria and Styria. Elsewhere, the average rise in

temperatures will bring us more days of summer and heat waves: according to various studies, the number of summer days per year with a temperature higher than 25 degrees Celsius is in danger of doubling by the year 2050. Because of this rise in temperature other extreme weather, such as torrential rain, hail, violent storms and periods of drought, can also be expected, although this will vary by region and is more unpredictable. For amateur gardeners, it is essentially the local climate and "microclimate" that matter. For that purpose, there are a multitude of relatively cheap possibilities to intervene and regulate, in order to have a positive impact on the condition of various plants".

## Influencing the garden microclimate

For gardeners, the local climate as well as the "microclimate" in the garden is vital, as it is the most important growth factor for plants. A multitude of relatively cheap possibilities allow you to influence this microclimate so that it has a positive effect on the growth of various plants. In the coldest regions, brick walls, large rocks or water features act as effective and compensatory accumulators of heat. In the warmest regions, providing constant shade to plants that are particularly sensitive to heat or dryness, as are many types of vegetable, can be very effective. Mixed cultivation of different sized herbaceous plants

protects the soil and ensures strong results, providing that all plants have access to enough light.

## Saving and preserving water

In these times of climate change, water risks are becoming one of a garden's major problems. They should not to be ignored on any grounds. Although on the one hand, heavy rain will continue to increase, on the other hand, global warming and increased evaporation will risk causing water shortages. However, you only need to make a few basic changes in order to save and preserve water supplies in the garden, such as collecting rain water and using it to water plants, putting straw underneath flowerbeds and only watering occasionally, but thoroughly.

## New plants in regions at higher altitudes

Climate change also has repercussions for flora. Trees and bushes are affected because, although they have a long life, they are not able to adapt to such rapid climate change if needed. According to Dr Helmut Pirc of the Dendrology & Nursery Department at the Höheren Bundeslehranstalt (HBL) Schönbrunn: "The problem is not the rise in temperature, but the increase in extreme weather conditions. Of course we can plant species of trees and bushes from warmer climates, but the risk with these is that they

may not be able to survive extreme weather conditions. So when we are choosing plants, it is important to also take into account the type of soil and local climate, and adapt these to the new environment. In other words, before starting a new patch or bed, it is perhaps advisable to impoverish the soil rather than improving it with compost, in order to guarantee sufficient resistance to the cold. Moreover, you could also introduce plants that are less sensitive to the cold into regions at higher altitudes, where there is currently only a limited range of trees and bushes”.

#### Replenishing plants

Due to global warming, we will have to abandon hydrophilic undergrowth, such as Delphinium and Phlox, in regions characterised by hot, dry summers. People growing these woodland plants will have to find more robust substitutes for their patches of woodland hydrophilic plants. Therefore it is advisable to replace White Swan Echinacea purpurea with Echinacea tennesiensis, a variety which handles drought better. There is also reason to opt for the robust Mint-Leaved variety of Wild Bergamot rather than the Monarda variety which is liable to mildew. A new addition to the sunflower family is the helianthus orientalis, a plant which prefers drier conditions. All of these woodland plants fare best in permeable, clay, sandy or mixed stone soils, but also in any other garden soil, as long as you make sure they aren't saturated and that they get enough nutrients in the form of small amounts of sedimentary compost.

#### The challenge of vegetable patches

Growing vegetables in gardens is becoming one of the biggest challenges due to climate change. Here, too, extreme weather conditions risk causing major damage to vegetable patches. DI Wolfgang Palme, from the Market Gardening Department of the Höheren Bundeslehr- und Forschungsanstalt for horticulture in Vienna, recommends: “Emphasise mixed farming in your vegetable patch. It not only reduces the problem of parasites, if you take care to place suitable plants next to each other, but also helps ensure that a whole harvest won't be threatened by the loss of one species”. Above all, Mr Palme recommends that gardeners use types of vegetables that have proved to grow well in that region. It is also good to rediscover rare, forgotten plant types, which have proved to be resistant in the past. According to Mr. Palme: “The future belongs to any type of plant that can adapt to local conditions and survive through uncertain times”.

Christine WEIDENWEBER

#### Climate change: The advantages and risks for gardens (in German)

128 pages, four colours, paper back  
avBuch 2009,

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# Great-Britain: Allotment Gardens: Food and Health in England

Geoff Stokes – National Secretary †

Allotment gardening has provided the landless poor with the opportunity to grow their own food to feed their families for over 150 years.

The true value of allotments in terms of produce grown is rarely considered except in times of national emergencies such as the two world wars when the crops grown provided a vital addition to the disrupted food imports which Great Britain had by then become used to.

In 1941, the Ministry of Agriculture

estimated the annual production of food grown on allotments at 1.3million tons. Although at that time the size of plots were 1/10 of an acre, this was the equivalent to just under ¾ of a ton grown on today's 250 sqm standard sized plots.

In 1975, the Royal Horticultural Society maintained a trial plot at Harlow Carr gardens, manned by students who spent 180 hours working the plot. On the 22nd November the total weight of produce grown was recorded as 1435lb or .64 ton. Their

records also included lettuce, radish, spring onions and sweetcorn, plus soft fruit which were not included in the recorded weight. It was also reported that there were still plenty of winter crops remaining on the plot. It is clear that if these additional crops were included the total weight in 1975 would be the same as reported by the Min of Ag in 1941.

I have been considering these figures further, and if they are multiplied by today's 330, 000 plots this is equivalent to a total of 241,560 tons of food



capable of being grown on the UK's existing allotments, much of which might otherwise be imported.

If my calculations are correct, this is the equivalent of 116 x 40ton arctic journeys per week using over £75,000 of fuel, and contributing considerably to the carbon footprint.

Vegetable growers and allotment gardeners also help to maintain a wider range of vegetable varieties and cultivars which might otherwise be lost because they would not be commercially viable being unsuitable for commercial growing.

Amateur vegetable growers are also preserving wide ranging horticultural skills because of the many different types of crops they grow. This is particularly important as most commercial growing appears to be closer to mono-culture.

In addition to the dietary benefits of access to fresh vegetables, gardening is acknowledged by many as being beneficial to health. This is particularly so with allotment gardening, where regular exercise is carried out over a prolonged period and in the open air. Gardening is also beneficial to ones mental health due to the contact with nature and (in many cases) the peace and quiet.

Allotment gardeners themselves have cited fresh air and exercise as their main reason for having an allotment, with access to fresh food a close second. They are also concerned about the use, or overuse, of chemicals in commercial growing, particularly food produced in other countries where controls do not seem as rigorous as in Britain. There have already been problems reported such as anti-freeze in wine and lately contaminated milk in China.

Allotment gardening has increased in popularity recently and it has been estimated that there could now be up to 100,000 people on waiting lists, and many believe the credit crunch will cause this to increase further, particularly as the costs of transporting food increases.

Any surplus produce grown on allotments could also be sold into the local community especially in rural communities where the village shop has closed down. Our members often express their disappointment at the lack of British grown produce available in the marketplace.

This increase in demand has prompted a number of local authorities to look at cutting plot sizes in half. This I believe would be a retrograde step as a standard plot is sufficient for a

family of four to provide a reasonable proportion of their annual fruit and vegetable needs. Smaller plots will actually reduce the total of produce grown on allotments and will force the ploholders to supplement what they would have otherwise grown themselves.

If allotments are to continue providing fresh wholesome and local produce, we need more good quality sites preferable sited away from polluting motorways and dual carriageways.

In conclusion, several years ago I finished an article I had written by asking whether we would have to wait for another National Emergency before allotments received the full recognition and support they deserve. Well, I believe that with the increase in fuel costs, the threatened loss of jobs due to the predicted recession, and concerns about the environment, that the time has now arrived.



## Great-Britain: Results from 'What is your plot worth?' survey 2008-2009 in England

Peter Horrocks – Northern Regional Representative

Commencing in March 2008, a selected number of the UK's allotment gardeners were asked to undertake a survey to evaluate the cash worth of the crops they grew in the following 12 months on their allotments. It proved quite difficult to persuade the ten gardeners from each of the ten re-

gions to take part in this exercise and what a blessing that proved to be. The final total of completed surveys came to twenty in number and handling that volume of data proved a handful in itself. I must admit that as an organisation we didn't appreciate the task we had set ourselves, and with the

benefit of hindsight, we should have perhaps carried out the exercise in conjunction with an academic institution as a partner in the exercise. I'm not making excuses or putting blame on anyone but we made some simple mistakes in originally handing over the data entry side of the exercise

to a young temporary staff member, unfamiliar with the weights and measures used, some recording in pounds and ounces, some in kilos and some in both plus other measures such as handfuls. There was also a lack of consistency in the naming of the crops, e.g. calabrese versus spinach, two crops but the same thing to some people! Right from the start of the project, Geoff Stokes was beset by ill-health and was unable to give matters the clear guidance which they needed. Anyway, during the initial data entry exercise, no attempt was made to enter all the data, significant omissions were made of things like herbs which were usually recorded as 'a few leaves of mint, some sage, handful of parsley etc', which were almost impossible to quantify. Most of the major crops were however fully coded and recorded in a massive spreadsheet.

After several enquiries from interested parties, not only the original recorders themselves but from other interested observers, and following Geoff's much lamented demise, I volunteered to try and bring some order and progress to the project and retrieved the data and some of the files. This took place in April of this year (2010) and despite some misgivings regarding the timeliness of the exercise; I recruited an expert volunteer database manipulator, Jim Lowery, and commenced work. We eventually decided to try and simplify matters by combining all twenty survey results into one spreadsheet containing the quantities for each month in a single figure. It took some time to then find a source of historical price data but in May, I discovered a source from the internet and bought data relating to the average supermarket price data for each crop to be sent to me via yet more databases. The prices quoted for each month for each vegetable were manually entered into the master spreadsheet and applied to evaluate the worth of each crop.

A total of expenditure of each person who took part in the survey on their plot was also recorded at the time,

as was the area of the plot and other details. These were averaged out over the whole exercise so that we are able to quote an average cost per standard plot for the exercise. Certain items of expenditure quoted by the recorders were omitted for a more realistic figure to be obtained, omitting such items as a £1400 structure for fruit was considered sensible. The prices applied to the produce were in all cases the lowest available from the data, no account was taken of the fact that in a lot of cases, the produce was a much higher quality than the cheapest, no account was taken of whether the varieties grown were of a premium nature which in many cases they were, and also no account taken of the premium that most of the crops would have carried on account of being considered 'organic'. To summarise, we think the values arrived at were probably very much an underestimate of the true worth. Despite this, we felt that the exercise was worth carrying out as no similar work has been done since the results from Harlow Carr trials in 1975.

The answers will come as no surprise to the allotment gardeners amongst us. The average cost of running a 300 square yard / 250 square metre plot was £202 per annum. The minimum value of the produce worked out at £1564 per plot, plus the inestimable personal satisfaction of growing your own and getting valuable exercise into the bargain.

It was however, pointed out, that this figure is including fruit and vegetables. If, for instance, you do not grow any fruit on your allotment, the figure will be considerably reduced as fruit is the most expensive commodity. On the other side of the equation, the number of hours worked by the average allotment gardener on a 300 square yard plot came out at 203 hours per year, or costed at the minimum wage rate of £5.80 per hour, £1170 per annum. This means that if all inputs and outputs are taken into account, there is no net profit in having an allotment, just a vast amount of satisfaction and pleasure in the re-



sults and the achieving thereof. I do wonder just how many of those hours are actually spent in working rather than chatting to one's fellow gardeners or just wandering round poking the hoe at the odd weed. I don't know how to include the food miles saved in this general exercise, but the average gardener grew on their 300 square yard plot 745 kg of fruit and vegetables, the highest value items being things like raspberries and currants.



**Shizuoka allotment garden site**

**Structure**

4 regional federations,  
38 associations,  
1.780 members

**Allotment gardens**

1.780 allotment gardens,  
with an average size of  
30-40 square meters,  
exclusively on leased land

**Administration**

All voluntary

**Ownership**

100 % Private

# Japan:

## Presentation of the Association for Japan Allotment Garden (1st Part)

Yoshiharu MEGURIYA,  
President of the Japanese allotment gardeners

Japanese allotment gardens are mostly sited on designated agricultural land under the private ownership of farmers. This is a consequence both of the Japanese system for regulating land use and high land values.

Individual allotment gardens in Japan are very small. Small plots make sense in the context of Japan's hot and humid summers, when weeds

grow quickly and inordinate amounts of effort would be required to keep larger plots weed free. But the extremely high price of land, particularly in urban areas, is also a factor, given that very steep user fees would have to be charged for larger plots.

Allotment gardens enjoy limited stability and security in Japan, as they are recognised as a form of agricul-

ture, and are thus dependent on the farmer's continuing participation and support.

**History and background**

The first allotment garden in Japan was established in the city of Kyoto in 1924, and was based on the British model. Allotments then spread to Tokyo, Osaka and other cities, but their number diminished as a consequence of the Second World War,



and the remaining sites were abolished in 1949.

After the war the American occupation authorities abolished large-scale landlordism in the countryside, believing this to have been a key cause of Japan's former militarism. Instead, as part of a deliberate strategy to democratise the countryside, they promulgated the "Agriculture Land Law", which restricted both the ownership and the right to buy and sell agricultural land to farm households. Cultivated land covered by this law also received official designation. The conversion of land thus designated as agricultural to other uses was also strictly controlled. As a consequence, it became impossible to establish allotment gardens.

During the subsequent era of rapid economic growth, Japanese cities expanded rapidly into their surrounding regions, and a large quantity of agricultural land became enveloped within the urbanised areas. Under these circumstances the strict regulation of purchases and sales of agricultural land and its conversion to other uses was increasingly called into question. Growing numbers of farmers were going part-time, and agriculture experienced severe labour shortages. Interest grew rapidly in the idea of turning land over to vegetable gardens for use by urban residents, to be established through the cooperative endeavours of farmers and urbanites, and from around 1970 gardens of this nature began to

emerge in various parts of the country. This really marked the birth of the contemporary allotment gardening movement in Japan. The "Chigusadai Gardening Circle" was founded at this time (in 1973), along the lines of a European

gardening society, as an organisation of allotment garden users operating in constructive partnership with the owners of the land (that is, with farmers in the Japanese case), and it has continued to operate successfully to this day.

In response to these trends, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry enacted a law that legitimised the development of allotment gardens by farmers, and also made it possible for local governments and agricultural cooperatives to lease agricultural land for the purpose of opening allotment gardens. An additional law was also enacted to make it possible to develop and maintain the infrastructure needed for allotment gardens.

The allotment gardens set up by local authorities and agricultural cooperatives were regarded as a public service, however, and as such it was seen as necessary that as many people as possible should have access to them, and in response, the period over which any one individual could occupy a garden was kept as short as possible, with an absolute limit of five years. To help ensure that this limit was adhered to, garden users were not allowed to set up their own associations. The consequence, however, has been that the standard to which these gardens are maintained has deteriorated, because neither the users or the site operators have much incentive to improve the soil or practice crop rotation.

On the other hand, as participation in allotment gardening has spread, so also has the enthusiasm of people for a higher quality of provision, in emulation of the beautiful gardens that are to be found on the European continent. Enthusiasts for this style of allotment gardening founded the Japan Kleingarten Association (the predecessor of today's Association for Japan Allotment Garden), with the purpose of promoting the establishment in Japan of allotment gardens in the German Kleingarten tradition. This organisation has taken a leading role in the support of allotment gardens in Japan and activities directed to this end.

Meanwhile, urban-based organisations such as the Chigusadai Gardening Circle in Chiba Prefecture have been encouraging gardeners in Japan's urban areas to take a more active role in allotment-related activities and to form prefectural-level federations, while also participating in the work of the Japan Kleingarten Association.

Distinctive features of allotment gardens and allotment gardening in Japan

In Japan allotments have been founded either by farmers or by local authorities or agricultural cooperatives that have leased land from farmers. The tenures granted to individual gardeners are very short, and on most sites the users remain unorganised. As a result, there is little connection between the management of the sites and the activities of individual gardeners, the overall quality of cultivation and garden maintenance is poor, and the position of the gardens is insecure.

To be continued



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*Paris, pollution scare*

## Participation by NGOs and civil society

Derek Osborn, Chairman of UNED/UK and of the European Advisory Group

There is increasing pressure from NGOs and representatives of other groups in civil society throughout Europe to participate in work on environment and health. For the London Conference of European Ministers of Environment and Health taking place in June 1999, the WHO has been breaking new ground by seeking an active engagement with such groups from the outset of the process.

### Healthy Planet Forum

The WHO invited UNED/UK to act as the main co-ordinator for this process of engagement. UNED/UK is an umbrella group within the UK with members drawn from all sectors of civil society – business and trade unions, local government, academic institutions, environmental and development NGOs, women's groups and others. UNED/UK was therefore an appropriate link point for the WHO

to select as its partner in the UK, working closely with the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health. It has taken the lead in organising the Healthy Planet Forum, the parallel meeting for NGOs and other groups from around Europe. (1)

It was clear that there would also need to be a broad Europe-wide network drawing in similar groups and organisations across Europe in order



for there to be a full engagement of civil society at a pan-European level. After wide consultations, a European Advisory Group was established to support the environment and health process with representatives from environment and health NGOs, trade unions, environment and health professionals, women's groups, parliamentarians and local government and other appropriate groups drawn from Western, Central and Eastern Europe. The Ecoforum which played a similar role for the Aarhus conference was particularly helpful and active in mobilising its network of environmental NGOs in this process. So too was AMPED.

Members of the Advisory Group and other NGOs around Europe have been active throughout the process in interacting with the official process, bringing forward suggestions for action and implementation on all the subjects under discussion, commenting on official papers as they have emerged, and networking with a much wider range of interested bodies and groups throughout Europe.

**Urgent – action!**

We welcome the way in which the ministerial meeting and the preparatory meetings leading up to it have opened their doors to participation and engagement by NGOs and other groupings. We are glad to have had the opportunity to contribute ideas and recommendations. We believe, however, that in several areas, the official work and the ministerial declaration do not go far enough. Some of the conclusions are not adequate to the scale of the problems revealed by the analytical papers from the WHO and the European Environment Agency. In many areas the mechanisms and resources for implementation are not sufficiently defined. Some important subjects are not being addressed at all.

We underline in particular the following severe problems identified in the

WHO overview report:

- the increasing prevalence of asthma, allergy and respiratory sensitivity, potentially linked with the environment;
- the re-emergence of a number of communicable diseases including tuberculosis, particularly in the NIS;
- the increase of foodborne disease including salmonellosis and campylobacteriosis in many parts of the region;
- continuing shortages of freshwater in some parts of the region, and re-emerging problems of microbiological hazards;
- indoor air quality problems throughout the region, and continuing problems of external atmospheric pollution by NOx and fine particles;
- unacceptably high levels of road accidents throughout the region.

We believe that these and other problems of environment and health require much more urgent attention than they have so far been given, with clear commitment to specific targets and timetables for improving the problems, and commitment to mobilising the necessary resources at local, national, regional and global level.

In the Healthy Planet Forum we expect to draw attention to these points. We shall urge the WHO and all the European member States participating in the conference to consider these issues further during the follow-up to the conference and its implementation. Much more political commitment is needed than we have seen so far if we are to make real progress on these crucial problems.

**National and Local Programmes**

We believe that national and Local Environmental and Health Programmes (NEHAPs and LEHAPs) ought to have a key role to play in integrating environment and health strategies at national level. In our experience, however, NEHAPs and

LEHAPs have not so far been as effective as they ought to be. They have not analysed the connection between environmental and health sufficiently thoroughly. They have not engaged a sufficiently wide range of the public and other groups in their preparation. They have not been given as much political priority and resources as they need in order to deal with the problems adequately.

**Water and health**

We welcome the Protocol on Environment and Health which Ministers are expected to adopt in London as an important step towards the improvement of the environment and of health.

We are urging all European States to sign the Protocol in London, to ratify it within 12 months, and to establish implementation programmes as soon as possible, with specific targets for improvements to be achieved by specified dates during the first decade of the next century. We are urging countries to identify clearly the resource requirements of these strategies. We are urging the international financial institutions and other sources of external finance to review the investment needs of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe to implement these strategies and to develop up plans by the end of 2000 to mobilise appropriate resources.

**Transport, environment and health**

We believe that transport has more impact on environment, health and safety than any other economic sector. We therefore support the objectives of the Charter which Ministers are expected to adopt in London as a first step. We consider that by itself the charter is no more than a statement of objectives and will not be strong enough to alter the powerful forces which are driving the development of transport in unsustainable directions. We therefore believe that it will be necessary to move on from the charter to the negotiation of a legally

binding convention to promote sustainable transport solutions as soon as possible. We are urging WHO and UNECE to expedite work on exploring the possible elements of such a convention.

#### Children's health and the environment

We are deeply concerned about the worrying increase in childhood respiratory diseases throughout the region, and about other worrying trends in child and reproductive health in some parts of the region, several of which are linked to poor environmental conditions. In many regions with transitional economies, children are subject to severe contamination by a wide variety of potentially hazardous agents in the air, water, food, and soil and in the built environment. Radiation and reprotoxic chemicals have especially severely affected children and generations yet unborn.

We think it intolerable that the health of a new generation of children should be prejudiced from birth by poor environments created by their forebears. We insist that the highest priority should be given to correcting those adverse environmental factors that have the strongest influence on children's health. We want to see a strong action programme in this area with specific targets for improvement and regular monitoring of progress.

#### Other subjects

We have identified a number of other subjects not being dealt with by European Ministers in London this year which are important – including the impact of chemicals and of radiation, and all the issues connected with food safety. We shall be organising parallel discussions on some of these issues at the Healthy Planet Forum, and urging Ministers to take further action on them either at the London conference or in subsequent follow-up work.

Finally there is the question of resources for implementation of environment and health programmes in

member States, particularly in some of the Eastern Europe countries where the problems are the greatest and the investment needed is correspondingly larger.

Environment and health problems throughout Europe are serious. Major political commitment and resource deployment is needed to tackle them. We are doing everything we can to highlight the scale and urgency of the issues. The time for action is now.

1) It will take place in Central Hall Westminster in June alongside the official Conference in the QE II Conference Centre next door.



*Consumer organisations encourage supermarkets not to use PVC packing materials for foodstuffs.*

# Citizens' environmental rights: The Aarhus Convention

Willem J. KAKEBEEKE, Assistant Director General, Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment in the Netherlands

In the past 25 years citizens and environmental as well as consumer organisations have been successfully influencing (inter) governmental decision-making in the field of environmental health. A few examples can illustrate this.

#### Recent evolution

During the 1970s in a number of industrialised countries, public concern in respect of the health effects of increased UV-B radiation due to ozone depletion by chlorfluorocarbons led

to national and international action to reduce emissions of ozone-depleting substances. The practice of dumping low radioactive waste into the Atlantic Ocean by the Netherlands was abolished after intensive exposure by environmental organisations. Actions of this nature have also been affecting decisions by the private sector. In the absence of formal regulations, citizens and consumer organisations have played an important role in the decision by supermarkets not to use PVC packing materials for foodstuffs.

#### Better handling

The United Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992) recognised this development. Heads of States and Governments of more than 180 countries and the European Communities adopted the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21. Principle 10 of the Declaration states inter alia: « Environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level ». The chapter «Strengthening the role of

major groups» of Agenda 21 sets out ways and means for the involvement of actors, e.g. non-governmental organisations, local authorities, workers, farmers, scientists, business and industry, to achieve sustainable development.

**Right of access to information**

Never before, so strong an emphasis had been laid on the responsibilities of all actors in society. Where in the past governments themselves sought to find the proper environmental solutions Agenda 21 demands a participatory approach. Obviously all these actors are at the same time citizens, or more precisely, in the first instance, citizens. They have the right to live in a healthy environment but at the same time bear a shared responsibility for it. To bear this responsibility and to participate in environmental decision-making citizens need to have access to information.

**Participatory democracy**

To empower their citizens, governments of Europe and central Asia and the European Communities at the 4th Ministerial Conference « Environment for Europe » in Aarhus (Denmark), adopted on 25 June 1998 the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters and a large number of them signed it. The Convention, which covers environmental health as well, guarantees the rights of every person in the three fields it addresses, without discrimination as to citizenship, nationality or domicile and in the case of a legal person (inter alia NGOs) without discrimination as to where it has its registered seat or an effective centre of its activities.

The Convention gives the public broad opportunities to be informed and to request actively environmental information from public authorities, excluding confidential data. For a wide range of specific activities, not



**Public concern in respect of the health effects of increased UV-B radiation due to ozone-depletion by chlorofluorocarbons led to actions to reduce emissions of ozone-depleting substances.**

only those covered by environmental impact assessment-procedures, the public will be in a position to participate in the decision-making. The same applies to a large extent to decisions on environmental plans and programmes, and with a lesser degree of commitment to the preparation of policies. Provisions concerning access to justice form the necessary complement for citizens to ensure that their rights are not impaired. The Convention intends to support and fine-tune the democratic decision-making processes in the field of environment, not to replace them.

**Signatures and ratifications**

By the end of 1998 an overwhelming majority of countries of Europe and central Asia (39), part of the UN Economic Commission for Europe which prepared the Convention and the European Communities have

signed up. However, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. An indication of the eagerness of governments to implement the Convention will be the speed by which they present the bill on the ratification of the Convention to their Parliaments. The discussion on Public Participation, Access to Information and Access to Justice in Environment and Health Matters at the London Conference on Health and Environment in June of this year offers governments an opportunity to confirm their readiness. Parliaments, on behalf of the public – their electorate – will then have to play a most crucial role in empowering citizens rapidly. The entry into force of the Convention early in the year 2000 should become the millennium mark. P.S. Today the ratification procedures are not yet completed in all the countries that signed the convention.



*Village near Santana (Madeira)*

# ICOMOS – A Charter for Vernacular Architecture

Marc de CARAFFE,

President of the International Committee of vernacular architecture, Canada

Researcher John B. Jackson opts for a pragmatic approach to vernacular architecture as he defines this concept in the following terms: “the vernacular is whatever the average home builder accomplishes daily”. (1) The authors of the Charter on the built vernacular heritage share this sense of practicality. For instance, in this Charter, which was officially

adopted by ICOMOS at its 12th General Assembly (Mexico, 1999), examples of what constitutes vernacular architecture are provided instead of a definition. (2) According to this document, the vernacular may be recognised by a manner of building shared by the community, by a recognisable local or regional character sensitive to the environment, by coherence of

style, form and appearance, or by the use of traditional expertise in design and construction which is transmitted informally, by an effective response to functional, social and environmental constraints, or by the effective application of traditional construction systems and crafts.

A large measure of pragmatism can



**Houses near Luxor, Egypt**



**Village in Corsica**

also be found in the principles and guidelines of the Charter on built heritage, as they do not try to enforce a rigid doctrine of conservation principles that would only result in the loss of this type of heritage in the long run. The Charter's principles are based on the involvement and support of vernacular communities and make an appeal for their continuing use and maintenance. In a sense, these principles are in line with Kingston W. Heath's concept of "cultural weathering", as they allow dwellers to shape and change their built environment according to their needs. (3) Instead of being prescriptive, the principles of conservation of the Charter can be liberally used in order to maintain living communities. Changes to vernacular buildings are acceptable if they respect the cultural values and the traditional character of the communities. The Charter further states that the built vernacular herit-

age is an integral part of the cultural landscapes and that this relationship should be taken into consideration in the development of conservation approaches. It implicitly recognises that rigid conservation measures applied to a cultural landscape can result either in destroying this landscape, as it would no longer be economically viable, or in transforming it into a museum. The Charter is aimed at maintaining and preserving groups and settlements of a representative character, region by region. This is why it recommends that interventions to vernacular structures should be carried out in a manner that will respect and maintain the integrity of the situation, the relationship to the physical and cultural landscape, and of one structure to another. But more importantly, the Charter acknowledges the importance of maintaining traditional know-how as the vernacular expression is mostly founded in the continuity of traditional building systems and of traditional skills. The Charter recommends that these skills be retained, recorded and passed on to new generations of people and builders through education and training.

The authors of the Charter on vernacular architecture never intended to draft a doctrinal statement. Their pragmatic approach is based on the fact that it would be impossible to use rigid conservation standards in preserving the basic character of an evolving cultural landscape because,

as Professor Pierre Larochelle has noted, living communities are constantly making changes to their built environment. (4) In fact, the Charter asks conservation professionals dealing with vernacular architecture to understand the formation and the transformation processes of a cultural landscape before making any intervention. This level of attention should be applied when dealing with vernacular settlements and buildings as well. (5)

- 1) "The vernacular is whatever the average home builder accomplishes daily" John B. Jackson «The Domestication of the Garage», *Landscape* 20.2 (1976) p. 19
- 2) The Charter is available on line at the following site: <http://www.international.icomos.org/chartes.htm>
- 3) Kingston Wm. Heath, *The Patina of Place : The Cultural Weathering of a New England Landscape*, University of Tennessee Press, 2001.
- 4) Pierre Larochelle, "Le paysage humanisé comme bien culturel" *Continuité* (Québec, Canada) no. 110, automne 2006 pp.20-22.
- 5) The author wishes to thank Ms Rhona Goodspeed from Canada, Ms Kirsti Kovanen from Finland and Monique Trépanier from Canada for their cooperation

A comparative reading of the Granada and Florence Conventions:

# an alliance between architectural heritage and landscape

Maguelonne Déjeant-Pons, Head of the Cultural Heritage,  
Landscape and Spatial Planning Division in the Council of Europe



**Houses in Santana (Madeira)**

Under the Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granada, 3 October 1985), the expression "architectural heritage" is considered to include the following permanent properties: monuments (all buildings and structures of conspicuous historical, archaeological, artistic, scientific, social or technical interest, including their fixtures and fittings); groups of buildings (ho-

mogeneous groups of urban or rural buildings conspicuous for their historical, archaeological, artistic, scientific, social or technical interest which are sufficiently coherent to form topographically definable units), and sites (the combined works of people and nature, areas which are partially built upon and sufficiently distinctive and homogeneous to be topographically definable and are of conspicuous his-

torical, archaeological, artistic, scientific, social or technical interest). According to the European Landscape Convention (Florence, 20 October 2000), "landscape" means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.

Should we not consider vernacular



**Windows: Russian federation**

housing, which is all too often ignored or mistreated, in the light of these two international treaties? Surely, the unique beauty of housing and the surrounding landscape often stem from the harmonious combination of the buildings and their location.

So it is worth drawing attention to the basic principles laid down in these two treaties:

- The architectural heritage constitutes an irreplaceable expression of the richness and diversity of Europe's cultural heritage;
- Landscape contributes to the formation of local cultures and is a basic component of Europe's natural and cultural heritage;
- The architectural heritage is a "common heritage" of all Europeans;
- Landscape contributes to "consolidation of the European identity";
- The quality and diversity of European landscapes constitute a "common resource";
- The architectural heritage bears inestimable witness to our past, and it is important to hand a system of cultural references down to future generations;
- Infringements of the law protecting the architectural heritage must be met with a relevant and adequate response by the competent authority;
- Landscape and its protection, management and planning entail "rights and responsibilities for everyone";
- It is important to reach agreement on the main thrust of a common policy for the "conservation" and "enhancement" of the architectural heritage;
- We need to achieve sustainable development based on a balanced and harmonious relationship between social needs, economic activity and the environment.



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