

Kortrijk, 25th August 2018

## **Diplomas**

FIVE ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATIONS WERE REWARDED AT THE OCCASION OF THE STUDY SESSION IN KORTRIJK.

### **1) THE DIPLOMA FOR INNOVATIVE PROJECTS WAS AWARDED TO:**

#### **1) The Swinbrook Road Allotments to the North of Carterton (GB)**

The Allotment site has 45 full plots on a 1.22 hectare site to the North of Carterton on the edge of the Cotswolds.

The aim of their projects is to improve the soil and working conditions for all the allotment plot holders on Swinbrook Road Allotments and to increase the popularity of the allotments in the local community.

They have improved the site facilities using several innovative techniques, such as reusing materials which would have otherwise gone to landfill or burnt.

One can mention among others:

- They have negotiated with the Royal Air Force base at Brize Norton to receive all collected leaves and garden waste which would normally go to landfill 25 kilometres away saving transport pollution and landfill.
- Southern Electric were replacing and burning the old wooden overhead supply poles. Following the committee's request they were brought to the site for future use, one use being support for fencing around this huge compost heap in addition to some dismantled second hand wire fencing from a fencing contractor.
- Old building bricks and hard-core was acquired from a local demolition site and used for the drainage and levelling of a previously unusable wet area.

- They now also receive wood chippings from a local landscape gardener who does arboriculture work which is being used extensively for walk ways and footpaths.
- Plot holders have acquired and planted 150 trees around the perimeter of the site to screen the new housing built adjacent to the site.

It is felt that the plot holders on this site have used great initiative in acquiring the above materials their imaginative and ‘innovative activities’ have greatly improved the facilities of the site not only to the benefit of their members but also their local community. In the process of doing the above have also minimised air pollution, landfill requirements, smoke pollution from burning treated timber and reduced the need for many road miles resulting in benefits to the wider community.







## **II) THE DIPLOMA FOR ECOLOGICAL GARDENING WAS AWARDED TO:**

### **1) De Roshaag in Peer (B)**

De Roshaag is a young and small project, with 17 gardens and one show/demo garden, an example for all ecological parks in Flanders. In 2017 the project was rewarded the Ecological garden label with the highest possible score.

Together with the city council they are working on the area surrounding the gardens to make the park more attractive, nature friendly and welcoming for the neighbourhood.

There is a composting space where the entire city can learn how to compost. There are regular demonstrations and all kinds of different composting methods tested.

For insects, birds and hedgehogs there is much place to crawl, feed and sleep in and around this park. There are dead hedges made of pruning materials, ideal for insects and hedgehogs. Multiple insect-hotels for wild bees and others, a herb garden and several wild flowerbeds to feed and hibernate in.

There are areas next to the gardens which contain wild vegetation. In these areas special attention went to the different layers: the canapé, shrubs and the undergrowth. They tried to mimic a real forest.

They are working with a beekeeper to produce local honey on the spot.

No pesticides are used in the park. Workshops and demonstrations are given to advice alternatives. In the show garden they experiment with new techniques and different plant species.

All gardeners share a common shed with a composting toilet. This reduces the space needed for individual sheds. On top there is a green roof and a small solar panel for the light and toilet. All remaining water is used to water the gardens in dry periods.

There are a few manual water pumps spread throughout the project as well.

Workshops and presentations are given for the gardeners, neighbourhood, schools and all other people that are interested.

100 % of the allotment gardeners take part in the ecological gardening.







## 2) The association De Hoge Weide in Utrecht (NL)

The Amateur Gardeners' Association De Hoge Weide is located in Park Groenewald in Papendorp in the polder of Utrecht since 2003. The park-like design, the combination with the office villas and the public character of the garden site are unique in the Netherlands. In 2010 the association started the project natural gardening. In 2017, they received four dots for the natural management of the park.

The members of the association do on a regular bases general work in the park and the theme gardens in which natural gardening has become commonplace. Therefore De Hoge Weide can proudly report that about 90% of members in their own maintain their garden in a natural way.

### NATURAL GARDENING

Four of the five theme gardens on De Hoge Weide are laid out to promote the diversity of flora and fauna.

### PROJECTS

The project: "The Nursery" with its own garden for the pre-cultivation of plants provides members with information about sowing and growing plants. The result is planted along the banks.

A new project with early spring bloomers is currently under development.

The association also started a project concerning renewable energy.

### MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

The maintenance of the park is organised by the working group: "Natural Management". According to a schedule, work is carried out and activities are organised for members and visitors. The working group also identifies problems in individual gardens.

### COMMUNICATION

On a regular basis workshops are organised where knowledge of members is shared with other members.

The workshop: Help, I have a garden! provides new members with an introduction to natural gardening and helps them on their way in their new garden.

The signposts and information boards lead visitors through the garden site. The large information boards in the theme gardens have an educational value. A map with a walking route is available for visitors. A large part of the visitors work in the offices in and around the park.





### 3) The garden site De Groote Braak in Amsterdam (NL)

About 6 years ago, Garden Site de Groote Braak introduced natural gardening. It started with an inspection by the AVVN and an advice for the next few years. The Committee on Nature and Environment was installed and slowly a shift was made on the garden site. In addition to more traditional gardening, parts of the park were maintained in a natural way. The last 2 years were given an extra boost with the support of an advisor to the AVVN. This resulted in the obtaining of the National Quality Mark Natural Gardening with the maximum of 4 dots on the ladybug.

#### REUSE OF RAW MATERIALS

Finely chopped materials

Pruning wood is shredded and reused. Chopped materials are used in the public green parts of the garden site and by gardeners in the private gardens.

Composting

Garden waste from the public green of the garden site and the individual gardens is also composted. At the moment the compost is only used for the public parts, soon we hope to have plenty that also gardeners can benefit and use it on their gardens. In addition, we motivate the gardeners to compost on their gardens.

Waste disposal

Glass, paper, grease, household waste and plastic are collected separately and this can be recycled again.

#### ANIMALS

Butterfly garden, insect hotel, bee hive, “Stobbenwal”, Hedgehog castle

In several places, small insect boxes are made. There is a stobbenwal (rows of branches and stumps deposited for animals) for soil organisms and the 1st bee hive is populated. In order to provide good food supplies, a butterfly garden has been laid out with several banks of wild flowers.

Toad pool and nature friendly banks, floating islands

Besides a place for amphibians, birds such as ducks have found a place to stay. An educational trail along the toad-pool was laid out.

#### BEDS, HERB GARDEN AND LANES

Recently, De Groote Braak started a herb garden. Garden members can pick these herbs for their own use.

## MOVING POLICY

Two years ago the garden site started the phased mowing, since then this has been expanded. The aim of this way of mowing is to create an as large as possible diversity of plants and animals.

## ECOLOGICAL PRODUCTS

The shop is only sells nature-friendly garden products and cleaning agents.

## HIKING TRAILS AND INFORMATION SIGNS

There is a circular walk on the park that runs along the special places in the park. In these places, information signs are placed with explanations.

## COMMUNICATION

Via the garden newspaper, website, newsletters, workshops, information signs, guided tours and additional explanations to new gardeners, all gardeners are informed about natural gardening.







#### 4) Garden site Wijkerhout in Amsterdam (NL)

After a 2-year project, the garden site acquired the National Quality Mark Natural Gardening, with the maximum score of 4 dots. An estimated 75% of gardeners participate in natural gardening. On a regular basis the members alternately organise debates and practical lectures concerning the ecological practices.

#### INDIGENOUS FLORA AND FAUNA

The Water land north of the IJ, on the old promenade near Schellingwoude, existed as impenetrable wildernesses until the 11th century. Garden site Wijkerhout was built in 1962 for and by city dwellers. The changing time spirit is visible in the gardens; Special nature-friendly projects are side by side with more traditional garden designs.

#### WATER MANAGEMENT

Good water management ensures dry feet in this area. Gardeners work together with neighbours and government (Water Authority) to help with dredging and maintain banks.

#### FAUNA, MIGRATION AND INTERNATIONALLY VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

The gardeners strive to secure migration opportunities for internationally vulnerable populations with guide species such as the ring snake, the Nordic vole mouse and the otter.

#### INSECTS, BIRDS AND BATS

The beekeeper association, local residents and gardeners have together set up a separate terrain as a bee-park with melliferous plant and honey bees. Scattered around the park live bats in special nest boxes. There is a bird boulevard with housing for all kinds of birds. Birdwatchers track observations and count among other things protected birds such as blue heron, swifts, Kingfisher, eared Owl and Sparrow hawk.

#### COMPOSTING, WATER AND SOIL LIFE

In the 'Composting forest' garden waste is recycled, besides composting on one's own garden. Members bring garden waste and collect soil, wood is shredded. There is a place for the exchange of plants: free to bring or take.

## NATURAL PLAYGROUND

The playground is available for different ages with a water pump and a water course, playhouse, climbing frame, swings and slide.

## CLUBHOUSE, SHOP AND LITTLE TERRAIN

The farm Arbeid Adelt serves as a clubhouse and 'nerve center' for the gardeners. A few years ago an authentic farmhouse garden and a herbal corner were built. The gardeners meet there, enjoy healthy lunch from their own garden and attend lectures and workshops.

## COMMUNICATION, COOPERATION AND CO-USE

A signposted hiking trail over Wijkergouw and 5 neighbouring garden sites is open to the public during the season.

## EVOLUTIONARY LOOP

More ideas await realisation, such as: establishing a common greenhouse for growing plants and vegetables, rent out square meter trays to interested parties, setting up a circulation centre for swap objects, building a learning path for children.





