

# The Swiss Allotment Garden Federation's Resolution

## Allotment garden areas – Green with significant biodiversity

Biodiversity is the foundation for the health of all living species and ecosystems. Biodiversity is the natural heritage that we should leave for future generations. For that reason, we have an ethical and moral responsibility as a society.

In Switzerland, urbanisation developed in a rather hesitant manner up until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when it sped up. Today, three quarters of the Swiss population live in urban areas. The surface covered by built-up areas has almost doubled since 1970, and even now one square metre of earth is built upon every second. Because of this, agricultural land is being lost, natural habitats are being destroyed or cut into small pieces and a number of species are at risk of disappearing.

However, our allotment gardens are not just green spaces for people to relax and spend time here; they meet needs that will be increasingly important in the years to come, and provide space for biodiversity of flora and fauna. The allotment garden federation has brought about a change in favour of gardening in harmony with nature: gardeners tend their gardens in an ecological way. In this way, a respect for nature and an understanding of the value of non-human life are also reflected in society's most underprivileged educational setting. Allotment gardens also reduce noise and air pollution stemming from an ever-increasing traffic and are part of the "green lungs" and an oasis of quietness of our cities.

In this respect, they must be incorporated into town planning and not at the periphery – this will create even more mobility. This growing need must be integrated into town planning and put in place.

**We seek for recognition and protection of the proven effectiveness of our garden areas and those of allotment garden associations across Switzerland, as:**

- **Allotment garden areas make** a significant contribution to biodiversity, to protecting soil and climate, and to quality of life in residential areas.
- **Allotment garden associations support** the action plan for the Swiss biodiversity strategy, which the federal council will introduce to conserve the variety of species and to reduce the use of pesticides.
- **Allotment garden associations renounce** harmful pesticides in order to protect the soil and environment. Our statute confirms that our mission is to carry out gardening in a natural way.

**Allotment garden areas must be protected.** Garden areas that are not situated in the construction area should be saved as green spaces. We ask our politicians and

town planners to take this into consideration and apply it. In this way, significant spaces for leisure and biodiversity can be saved in residential areas.

**This resolution** has been approved by delegates at the Swiss Allotment Garden Federation's assembly on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2017.

Saint-Gall, 20<sup>th</sup> May 2017