

Green infrastructure? Only with allotment gardens

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Small gardens are under pressure. Because of the growing demographic development in the cities and municipalities there is more and more need for living- and commercial space. At the same time, high-quality and easily accessible existing green infrastructure must be protected, further developed or newly created. This is vital for the city of the future.

Allotment gardens play a decisive role in the maintenance and further development of urban green spaces, especially because of their optimal, inner-city location. Quick access to the allotment garden, ideally on foot or by bike, is a key feature of such an allotment garden. In addition, allotments in overheated cities are important cold-air and biodiversity “islands” and places of social interaction. And not only allotment gardeners should benefit from the use of inner-city allotment garden sites, but also residents without an own plot.

In the study "Changing allotment gardens - innovations for dense spaces" the potential to integrate allotment garden sites more strongly into urban open space planning is examined in detail. Thus, the interviewed municipal administrations are convinced that above all public accessibility, integration into the green and open space network, nature conservation, biodiversity and climate protection as well as publicly usable common areas can contribute to allotment garden sites being part of green infrastructure. Also, within the city and regional associations, the networking of the allotment garden sites with the existing urban open space is one of the most important tasks for a sustainable allotment garden system. Above all, potential is seen here in the integration of public foot, hiking and cycle path networks. Allotment gardens as green learning places, public play areas, social and cultural offers for the public and the creation of habitats for animals and insects are also mentioned as measures to strengthen the green infrastructure.

An allotment garden site consists of publicly accessible paths, communal areas and often also play areas in addition to the leased areas of the allotment gardeners,. Especially where the pressure on allotment gardens is increasing, it has to be ensured that surrounding residents also benefit from these areas. In order to ensure that the allotment gardens are opened up to the general public, the associations already make use of appropriate measures (see study "Changing allotment gardens - innovations for dense areas: <http://bit.ly/bbsr-studie>). In the course of new planning and re-planning measures for allotment garden sites, the surrounding neighbourhood should in the future be taken into account and

integrated to a greater extent, in addition to the allotment gardeners as a further important target group.

For the development of concepts for networking, a strong community of city and regional associations and local decision-makers from politics and administration, such as urban planning and green space offices, is therefore needed. After all, attractive public recreation areas not only serve to enhance the allotment garden sites themselves. At best, they are the connecting element of a city's green infrastructure. They not only qualify the urban green and open space network, but even expand it through their existing structures. In addition, open and experienceable allotment garden sites offer the chance to upgrade entire residential areas and contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of their residents.



*Photo: Thomas Wagner
Openly and well-
designed pathway at the
allotment garden site
“Sonnige Höhe” (sunny
heights) in Chemnitz*