

Netherlands: A 100th anniversary

Allotment gardening is deeply rooted in the Netherlands and the organized allotment gardening (in associations) also has a long history.

In May 2013, the Tuinwijk association in Groningen, the oldest member of the AVVN, celebrated its 100-year anniversary. The founder was a great industrialist, who wanted that people with a small purs also were entitled to have sufficient leisure opportunities.

The association is very dedicated to ecological gardening and received the diploma on an ecological gardening of the International Office du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux in 2012.



Tuinwijk was founded in 1913 and has had its present leisure garden site (6 hectares: 143 recreational and 24 vegetable gardens) since 1963.

In 1996 Tuinwijk started ecological management of their garden site. In 1998 Tuinwijk was one of the first five associations in the Netherlands to be awarded the National Quality Mark for Natural Gardening (two stars). In the following years Tuinwijk worked hard to further improve its ecological management: in 2003 they received three stars and last year, 2011, they achieved the maximum of four stars.

Some of the special projects on ecological gardening, developed by Tuinwijk:

- special pond for toads, frogs and newts
- fences of branches and twigs
- an insect hotel
- a butterfly garden
- a bee garden
- many different types of nesting boxes
- bat boxes
- use of green electric power
- wetland pond
- special education for children
- dry stone walling
- nature education trail
- information signs (to explain the ecological projects)
- bee hives (2012)
- many trees are named
- phased mowing

- encouragement of member gardeners to compost garden waste and use walls of branches to separate the gardens
- In the quarterly magazine of Tuinwijck (*De Tuinwijcker*) the garden members are kept informed on ecological matters
- The site is part of the ecological city structure of Groningen because of its special natural value.

The percentage of gardeners who effectively apply the criteria of organic gardening is approximately 85%.