

Allotment garden federations were rewarded at the occasion of the European day of the garden.

The diploma for ecological gardening was awarded to:

- the Berne-South allotment garden association (CH)
- the Wipkingen allotment garden association – allotment site Käferberg (CH)
- the Abstede allotment garden association (NL)
- the De Boerderij allotment garden association (NL)
- the Piccardthof allotment garden association (NL)
- the Tuinwijck allotment garden association (NL)

The diploma for social activities was awarded:

- the Berne East allotment garden association (CH)
- the Geneva allotment garden federation (CH)
- the Slotenkouter allotment garden association (B)

Switzerland: The allotment garden association from Bern South has received the diploma for an ecological gardening

The association Bern South is an important association with separate sites throughout the town. Twenty years ago everything was planted here in a monoculture and the idea of an ecological gardening was yet an unknown idea.

This has changed meanwhile totally. Since 1994, thanks to courses, the allotment gardeners were stimulated to change their gardening and use nature friendly methods. What is also new in Bern is that new members have the obligation to attend these courses. So they all get the basic knowledge of an ecological gardening.

President Peter Siegenthaler trains as well every year allotment garden councillors. Their mission is to check on all the sites that the allotment gardeners practice a nature friendly gardening.

This is a future orientated example and we hope that it will stimulate other cantons and associations to do the same.



Switzerland : The allotment garden association Wipkingen, site Käferberg received the diploma for an ecological gardening

The local association of Wipkingen already started its activities in the spring of 1915 as one of the first local groups of the association of the allotment gardeners in Zürich.

Today 712 allotment gardeners from 17 different nationalities cultivate approximately 145,000 square metres of horticultural land on 9 different sites.

A gardening that is respectful of nature is one of our main concerns. A visible sign of the practical realisation of this concern is that in 2010 two allotment garden members received one, respectively, three prizes in a biodiversity competition. A member of the Käferberg site received as well a diploma for a particularly respectful use of the soil.

The association also realizes many other projects, especially in the social area.



Netherlands: The association Abstede in Utrecht received the Office diploma for an ecological gardening

The garden site of Abstede is situated almost in the heart of Utrecht and approximately 8,000 m². It has been a horticultural area since the Middle Ages. The area is a stepping stone for urban wildlife.

Abstede started in 1996 as one of the five first Dutch associations with a project that led to their first National Quality Mark for Natural Gardening (3 stars in 1998).

All gardeners visit their garden on foot or by bicycle.

The only building on the allotment site is a small community building. They make use of solar energy.

Abstede separates their waste as far as there is waste. They reuse willow as beanstalks and braid fences and pruned branches for stands for a hedge of branches.

The lay-out of the gardens and the site is made in a nature friendly way: Nesting for birds, hedges of shrubs, nature garden etc.

The gardeners are stimulated and get informed to garden in a nature friendly way.

There is a joint purchasing of organic seeds and seedlings, manure etc.

Abstede has several contacts with similar minded organisations

The percentage of gardeners that effectively apply the criteria fixed is approximately 98%.



Netherlands: The association De Boerderij in Rotterdam received the diploma for an ecological gardening.

De Boerderij garden site of has an approximate area of 5 hectares and contains 120 gardens. The garden site is situated on the edge of Rotterdam. De Boerderij started in 1998 with natural gardening and it lead to their first National Quality Mark for Natural Gardening in 2000.

At the latest inspection held in 2011 the association achieved the highest level of four stars.

In the past four years the natural gardening working group has been working hard to develop the potential of the allotment site.

De Boerderij has developed or improved several features of natural gardening on their site as for example:

- a toads pond
- a butterfly garden
- a natural garden
- a wall for kingfisher



Netherlands: The association Piccardthof in Groningen received the Office diploma for ecological gardening

In 1942 the “Piccardthof” was founded to provide citizens with a place for them to grow food together with others. A suitable area of over 15 hectares was eventually rented in the low peatland in Peizermaden. A few years later the park expanded and became situated directly adjacent to the Piccardthofplas (a lake). This created an extremely diverse ecozone and Piccardthof was now part of the green lung in the south-western part of Groningen. At this moment about 300 families have a garden at the park. The gardens vary from gardens without a garden shed to gardens with a garden house in which members are allowed to stay overnight during the summer.

Piccardthof started in 1997 with natural gardening and it led to their first National Quality Mark for Natural Gardening in 1999.

Now in 2012 Piccardthof has acquired a unique position in the social and ecological environment of Groningen.

The basic theme is nature-friendly gardening! The Piccardthof Garden Committee (PGC) is the initiator and coordinator of various ecological projects and excursions on or around the park. Piccardthof especially wants to be noticed, but in a relaxed way. Thus Piccardthof tries to contribute to broadening understanding and to get support for creating a healthy and environmental friendly way of living.



Netherlands: The Tuinwijkstra association in Groningen received the diploma for ecological gardening

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

In 1996 Tuinwijkstra started ecological management of their garden site. In 1998 Tuinwijkstra 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, Tuinwijkstra 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.

Examples of ecological projects developed by the association:

- special pond for toads, frogs and newts
- a butterfly garden
- use of green electric power
- nature education trail
- many trees are named
- 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%.



Switzerland: The Bern East allotment garden association received the diploma for social activities

The Bern East association is an example for the future

This association situated in the German part of Switzerland is up today the only one having a plot for disabled people. Additional plots are planned.

It is not easy to create a plot accessible to disabled people because the paths have to be made accessible for wheelchairs. The individual plots have to be raised and special watering possibilities have to be planned.

The members have created themselves these plots with the support of the town horticultural service.

The basic idea was to try to integrate both disabled and healthy people into associative life.

This project has been very successful. Both persons really feel here at home. Therefore the association will try, if necessary, to create additional plots in adequate locations.

The association undertakes additionally other projects in the social area as for example the insertion of people having immigrated or asked asylum in Switzerland.





Switzerland: The Geneva association received the diploma for social activities

The project to create plots for disabled people has its origin in the perspicacity of Frédéric Schaer, honorary president of the Geneva allotment garden federation and former vice-president and honorary member of the Swiss allotment garden federation. This project aimed getting rid of the preconceived idea that the pleasure of gardening is exclusively reserved to those people, who enjoy good health.

After a feasibility study, the central committee of the Geneva federation decided in 2004 to start this new project. We had to separate the raised beds by corridors allowing wheelchairs to pass. To raise the soil was one problem but one had to consider a great number of other small details like for example the watering of plants, which constitutes another difficulty for people with a handicap.

Thanks to the financial help given by different institutions, the work could be done without exceeding the budget.

The inauguration of the two plots in the site “Les Blanchets” took place on September 14th, 2007 with many authorities attending the ceremony.

The infrastructures are especially adapted to people suffering from a disability. The facilities of the association on the site are also equipped with a specially adapted toilet.

Following this example four additional sites in Geneva welcome today people with reduced mobility and an allotment garden site in Bern (in the German speaking part of Switzerland) has inaugurated their plots for people with reduced mobility in 2011.





Belgium: The Slotenkouter allotment garden association in Sint Amandsberg (Gent) received the Office diploma for social activities.

New Allotment Garden Rises in Lapasan – Cagayan de Oro – Mindanao – Philippines

With the generous financial assistance of the Provincial Government of East Flanders and the Sint-Amandsberg Slotenkouter Allotment Garden of Gent, a new allotment garden for 12 families has been established in Sitio Hill Site, Barangay Lapasan (Hillside Allotment Garden).

It took a long time to find a suitable area. It is very accessible and well suited for gardening activities. In addition, the local community is already involved in small gardening activities.

The establishment of the garden is coordinated by PUVeP technician Clarito "Turok" Santos Jr., who is spending his holiday breaks in Cagayan de Oro, before returning to continue his masters studies in Germany in mid-October. He has already earlier established successful allotment gardens in cooperation with the communities of Kauswagan and Tibasak in Macasandig.

The gardeners will be further assisted in the implementation of the project by 20 students of Xavier University as part of their National Service Training Program (NSTP), a mandatory community involvement program for 2nd year students.

The garden was officially launched in the first week of December 2008, at the occasion of the celebration the 5th Cagayan de Oro Allotment Garden Day and has flourished ever since.

