

TEN ALLOTMENT GARDEN FEDERATIONS WERE REWARDED AT THE OCCASION OF THE EUROPEAN DAY OF THE GARDEN

The diploma for ecological gardening was awarded to:

1) *The allotment site Alfred Thinnes in Merl (L) received the diploma for an ecological gardening*



Following the integration of Merl into the commune of Luxembourg in 1920, the allotment garden association Merl-Belair was founded in this rural quarter.

During the last years, under the special leadership of Jacques Jourdan, the support of the Luxembourgish allotment federation and the city of Luxembourg the gardens have become an integral part of the green spaces of the city.

58 gardeners now cultivate their plots with a size between 100 and 250 sqm covering a total surface of 8,500 sqm. The site is surrounded by an orchard, an area with late mowing and is crossed by a bike and pedestrian path leading towards the forest of Leudelange and the neighbouring town of Bertrange via this green oasis.

In 2014, after many years of practice, the allotment site was declared as “site without pesticides” and participates in this way in the general green space policy of the town of Luxembourg in order to promote the local biodiversity.

To this effect have been created:

- A space with fruit trees with a space of late mowing
- An individualized water management and an encouragement to collect the raining water from the individual sheds
- Installation of beehives managed by a beekeeper under the acacias

In order to manage the waste the commune puts at the disposal:

- A trolley for the green waste which is regularly emptied. In return the gardeners receive compost for their gardens and for the inhabitants of the neighbouring living area free of cost
- A trolley for stones

The plots are leased to the gardeners under the observation of the following conditions:

- To cultivate their garden mainly with vegetables, which does not prevent a floral pleasure: Are cultivated for example corn, sunflowers, artichokes, rhubarb, beans, peppers and cabbage. You find many ways to protect tomatoes in our humid climate!

- To have at least one fruit tree in order to favour the development of pollination insects. So you find cherry, apricot, Mirabel, quetsch, pear, apple and a walnut tree on site as well as wines.
- To limit the surface of the shelter according to the applicable rules of the non construction area issued by the city of Luxembourg. Everyone has his style in order to fully enjoy the green and profit of the fresh air in the city!

Among the cultures you can already find a few solar panels.

Regularly the association also takes part in sensitization sessions for nature organised for the pupils of the city of Luxembourg and participates yearly with specific animations in the day of the nature in Luxembourg.

2) allotment association: “KGV Am Waldessaum II, Rostock-Warnemünde, LV Mecklenburg und Vorpommern” (D) received the diploma for an ecological gardening

The allotment site is situated next to the nature sanctuary „Stoltera“, with its impressive steep coastline and the dunes with its coastal forest which attracts every year numerous amateurs of nature. On the other side you find the protected landscape „Diedrichshäger Land“. So the allotment site is not only part of the near recreation area of Rostock, but it constitutes a meaningful transition zone between built areas and nature. The allotment gardeners are conscious of their special responsibility due to the location of their site and they garden in a nature friendly way.

3) The allotment association ATV Zonneweelde (NL) received the diploma for an ecological gardening



More than a decade ago the AVVN has developed a set of strict criteria on ecological gardening. To develop these criteria the AVVN worked together with several other nature conservation organizations.

Associations that want to obtain a certificate on ecological gardening from the AVVN have to comply with these strict criteria. The certificate knows four levels. ATV Zonneweelde has achieved the highest level in 2014 after more than a decade of learning and working on ecological gardening.

The gardening at ATV Zonneweelde is in accordance with the brochure “An ecological approach to allotment cultivation“, published by the Office International du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux“ .

What has ATV Zonneweelde been doing and is ATV Zonneweelde still doing in the field of ecological gardening?

- Planting trees and bushes that are typical for their ecological region and that provide sanctuary and food for birds and other animals.
- Creating shelters for animals with the help of tree trunks and reed.
- Building a four stories insect hotel.
- Building long walls of twigs, trunks and branches to provide good living conditions for all kinds of wildlife.
- Selling only environmental safe products in their garden shop.
- Realization of a nature education trail.
- Phased mowing.
- In co-operation with a beekeeper, beehives have been placed.
- Small butterfly gardens.
- Educational activities for the members of the association.
- Herb garden.
- Seeking co-operation with organizations that occupy themselves with the improvement of the environment.

4) The allotment association Vlijpark in Dordrecht (NL) received the diploma for an ecological gardening

HET VLIJPARK VOLKSTUINEN



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Vlijpark has achieved the highest level in 2014 after more than a decade of learning and working on ecological gardening.

- The last few year the following projects were developed: a rainwater buffer (wadi) leading to a toad pool with ecological bank; a wall of branches, both on the garden site as in the adjacent area; insects wall and bees hotel; a butterfly garden; wood piles for the soil

life; worms breeding; a school garden annex experiment and learning garden; reptiles accommodation; bird and bat nestings.

- A learning path for children is under development.
- There is a trading place where people can exchange seeds which is annexed to a seeds.
- Vlijpark offers space for learning-work projects for young people with physical, mental or social limitation.
- The central, ecologically sound, processing of garden waste into compost which is then used by the garden members on their allotment.
- The volunteer certificate "Vorst" and an in-house publication about the volunteers of the association.
- Vlijpark is part of the urban agriculture network Dordrecht.
- They support a vegetable garden project in Dordrecht, South Africa.

The percentage of gardeners that applies to the principles of ecological gardening, is estimated at about 80%.





5) The allotment association "Volkstuin- Werk van de Akker- Sint Amandsberg" (B) received the diploma for an ecological gardening.

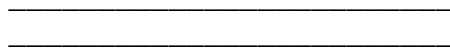


When the non-profit association „Volkstuin-Werk van de Akker Sint Amandsberg“ was founded in 1932, its objectives were mainly socio-political and charitable. Today the aims concern the environment and nature much more.

- Stimulation of the members for an ecological gardening.
The internal regulation stipulates the prohibition to use weed killing products. The gardeners can only use insecticides and fungicides for amateur gardeners.
- The use of fertilizers on the allotment sites.
Exclusive use of organic fertilizers.
- Activities and lectures that stimulate an ecological gardening.
All over the site there are panels informing the gardeners and the visitors on the advantages of an ecological gardening. There is also a demonstration garden concerning compost. Every year courses concerning an ecological gardening are organized. Every year the gardens are checked for their ecological quality (in 2014 64% of the gardens received the ecologic label).
- Further aims concerning the environment, stipulated in the statutes.
The association plans to take position on environment and nature questions.
- Activities for the sensitization of the population and for the safeguarding and improvement of the environment developed by the association.
 - The nature is present everywhere. The aim of an ecological gardening is to place nature within the garden.
 - An ecological gardening contributes to the quality of life, the environment, the landscape and nature.
 - The gardeners rediscover the beauty of nature in their garden and on the allotment site
 - The allotment site management is based on three ideas of sustainability, dynamism and diversity.
- Environment and nature are central aims of the association and one emphasizes a functioning that favours the environment and nature.
 - The leisure function is supported for the gardeners by the creation of water pumps, sanitary blocs, electricity and for the visitors by the creation of paths, grounds to play petanque and lawn areas.
 - The elements of the landscape are maintained: solitary trees, main ways, open spaces, water areas.....
 - The site is open all year round from sunrise until sun set.

- Yearly activities for nature and environment
 - Publications on an ecological gardening
 - Permanent instructions given on site
 - Ringing of birds
 - Distribution of manure in accordance with the European and Belgian regulations.
 - Controlled mowing
- Investments that are being realized

Further publications concerning ecological gardening, additional panels with information on an ecological gardening, nesting boxes for birds.



The diploma for innovative projects was awarded to:

1) The allotment garden association „KGV Südhang, Zwickau, LV Sachsen received the diploma for innovative projects

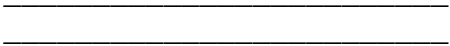
The association puts many efforts especially on children. Especially with the innovative project „Schrebino-Kinderland“, the association puts at the disposal an very important allotment garden plot. Two kittas can use this as education and presentation garden. The cooperation between allotment gardeners, children, parents and pedagogs is characterized by a relaxing together and which is serving as an example.



2) The allotment garden association “KGV Wühlmäuse 2000, Hamburg, LB Hamburg received the diploma for innovative projects

This association is qualified by its ecological engagement: drainages kept in a nature friendly way offer an exceptional living space to animals and plants. Innovative and especially sustainable is the pumping system for the irrigation which works with renewable energy (force of the wind).





The diploma for social projects was awarded:

1) The allotment association “KGV Licht-Luft, Kaiserslautern, LV Rheinland-Pfalz“ (D) received the diploma for social activities.

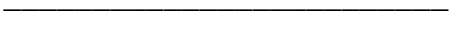
The reason to grant the diploma to this association is its engagement for young and old. With the school program young people help elderly people and learn at the same time all take advantage of the knowledge and the capability is of the others. During the programs offered during the school holidays offer interesting activities in the garden for the young children and during these senior afternoons the elderly can make new contacts.

The surplus of fruit and vegetables is given by the allotment gardeners to the fruit bank and they distribute then these products to the people in need.



2) The allotment association “KGV Ulmenweg, Merseburg, LV Sachsen-Anhalt (D) received the diploma for social activities.

By stimulating young generation, the animation of children and a large gardening advice concept for all gardening questions, the association makes a lot for its members. The association cooperates with several generation house of Merseburg. In fact, similarly to the allotment association you find here all age categories beginning with the baby’s up to very old people. They all take advantage each of another. With this concept the association has succeeded in reducing dramatically the age average.



The diploma for an ecological gardening and innovative projects was awarded to:

1) The allotment association: Gardens and Orchards of Marsannay- la-Côte received the diploma for ecological gardening and innovative projects



Between towns and vineyards

The St Urbain garden and orchard site (2.7 hectares) is determined by very simple geographical and historical data. For a long time this land was the property of the church (St Urbain monastery), before being sold in a number of plots to the French Revolution. In 2004 the area was turned into an area for urban development despite the arguments put forward by local gardeners.

So the “JVMC” association was born out of a defence character. The defence of the site having to pass before the administrative courts, the existence of the allotment garden association was a decisive factor in being able to appeal to the administrative courts.

Gradually JVMC grew from 15 members to more than 80. Today it has 70 active gardeners. The yearly membership fee remains low (€16).

Thanks to the support of the national federation of allotment and community gardens, JVMC was able to call on a hydrological valuation, carry out a wildlife inventory by the LPO (League for the Protection of Birds) and issue a 75 page dissertation.

Meanwhile, JVMC had become a vital part of society at a local level by regularly opening up the gardens for annual festivals on various topics (scarecrow festival, wind festival, well festival, garden festival), by organising markets and green swaps, by taking part in conferences on biodiversity and water resources, and by welcoming a regional ecological forum.

Historical research and the quality of the landscape allowed the garden area to be entered into the Burgundian vineyard climate zone, which has been classified as a world heritage site by UNESCO. JVMC has contributed to this campaign through its regeneration project of the vineyard peach.

2. A dynamic association through necessity

JVMC was created by geographical and historical conditions, and it remains characterised by constant research into innovation and openness towards the future.

Continuing to act to protect biodiversity

Diversifying growing cultures

Using water responsibly:

Supply is guaranteed thanks to 14 dry stone wells built in the 19th and 20th centuries. This group of wells must be classified as “small rural built heritage”.

Making up for equipment shortages

Maintaining external activities:

School activities: planting trees and helping in the vineyard peach nursery complements the students’ literary (studying the works of Giono) and scientific studies.

School gardens: it allows children from local primary schools (150 children) to practice gardening and include it in school projects.

The elderly: Visits for the elderly to the gardens during the summer and a project on a garden for the elderly, and winter activities with a traditional basketry workshop are arranged by JVMC.

The website and audio-visual productions

Natural basketry workshop

12 apprentice basket makers work the willow and use materials collected from around the gardens, the association's willow plantation (100 willows planted), or taken from the communal forest.

The arboriculture party

As part of a project, "Protecting ordinary natural environments", JVMC got involved 4 years ago in preserving the genetic assets of vineyard peaches in the winegrowing region:

Sharing needs and resources

JVMC was the initiative of the Dijon allotment garden associations groups, in order to propose a partnership to the urban community and to be able to regroup our purchases (bio straw, for example), arrange training etc

The calendar of tasks

JVMC cannot lead all of these activities without appealing to all of its members to participate. A calendar of tasks was put in place to address the shortcomings of some and the tepidness of others. Its compliance is included in the internal rules.

3. JVMC at the heart of a protected agricultural area

The current goal is therefore to definitively (?) keep urbanisation away from the site and to sustain the gardens.

