



# Youth Urban Gardening Concept

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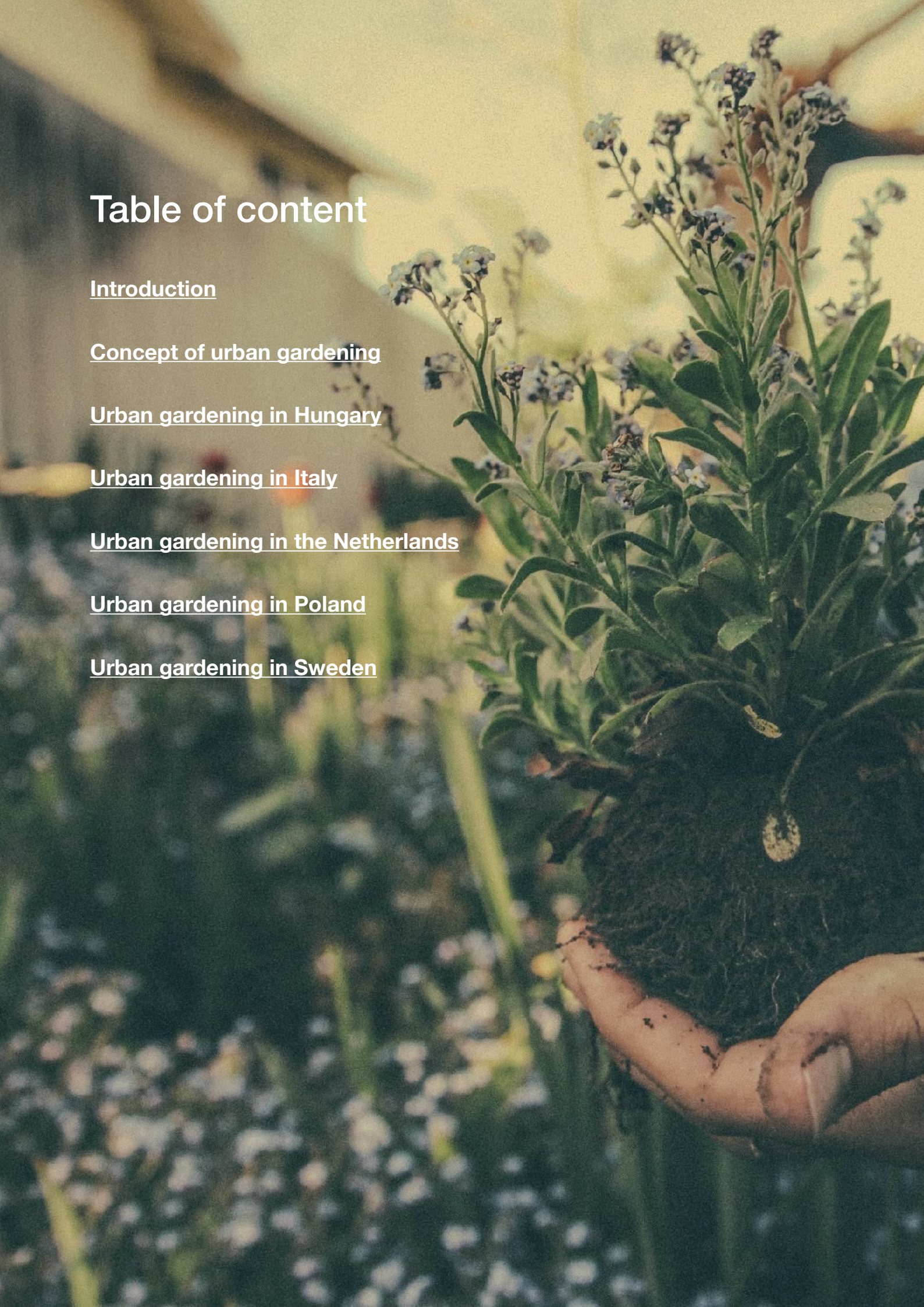
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# Introduction

The world population grows possibly from 6 to 9 billion people in 2050. The rapid increase causes the global diet to shift from animal to more plant-based products. A combination of population growth and dietary change challenges us to look for more sustainable food systems, in urban areas in particular. Even though youth claimed and proved global responsibility for climate change, there are many things to be done on local and individual levels. We (Youth), often overlooked, can become real agents of change and implement our own initiatives. For that we need to develop concepts aimed directly at youth and for youth.

The consortium of partners – NGOs from **Hungary, Italy, Poland, the Netherlands and Sweden** came up with **Youth Urban Gardening Concept**.

**Youth Urban Gardening Concept** in a form of handbook offers a selection of creative, ecological, sustainable and economical forms of planting and gardening in urban environments from the selected countries. Some of the examples bring us to the roots of food production; others can remind and teach youth basic survival skills once forgotten or neglected in a city environment. It also emphasises the importance of a sense of community as well as the power of individuals, regardless of age, social and economical status, number of square meters of the soil available or its physical absence.

The provided variety of beautiful examples proves that everything is possible in the enthusiastic hands of creative individuals. Be it multiplied by the energy, creativity and steam of the youth, specific of local possibilities and resources available, it would generate an unlimited number of new projects in the sphere of urban gardening and domestic food production. Current or future pandemics can serve not as a limit, but as a powerful facilitator for such initiatives.

Instead of reading scientific and often complex solutions to eco-farming in urban environments, youth will both collect and develop their own easy-to-do concepts in limited space and possibly with a zero-budget approach. **Youth Urban Gardening Concept** will provide different ways and inspiration to practice urban gardening.

The target group for our handbook is youth, youth workers and communities as well as a wider audience seeking for inspiration. We also hope that **Youth Urban Gardening Concept** will encourage understanding, respect and appreciation for nature and eco-systems we live in. They are not unlimited.

We hope that with the help of our publication, youth will increase its knowledge about urban gardening and its different models, encourage developing own sustainable and green ideas, engage youngsters in local green initiatives, help to develop leadership and active citizenship skills, increase youth employability potential, brings positive influence in communities and facilitate sustainable growth.



# Concept of urban gardening

During the recent decades gardening became a more common and very popular element of the urban environment. It benefits economy, health, food welfare and increases a sense of community.

Food supply in cities is an equally fundamental aspect of a well-functioning sustainable city as the city's supply of energy, water and transport opportunities. New forms of climate-proof urban cultivation such as greenhouses or other sheltered cultivation environments can make a significant contribution as well as increase the food safety and self-sufficiency of cities.<sup>1</sup>



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Urban gardening is in no way a new concept, as its roots trace back to ancient Egypt where community wastes were used to help feed the urban farming that existed during those times. Since those times, urban gardening has been used as a response to food shortages in Germany to the infamous Victory Gardens which were planted throughout the United States during World War I and World War II to respond to food pressures that existed during the war. More recently, urban gardening is used for more than just

food security. People find solace in having plants in the home and office, as well as increasing their general emotional and social wellbeing while reducing stress levels. Even the simple act of planting a plant on a balcony or window sill is a great way to become an active urban gardener.<sup>2</sup>

Gardening is also used in some programmes targeting youth and rehabilitation, but there is still much potential for developing new schemes, including business start-ups and food incubators, making it more attractive and available for youngsters.

The given below examples from **Hungary, Italy, Poland, the Netherlands** and **Sweden** provide an overview of the ideas and aim to serve as inspiration paving the way for creativity and motivation specifically for youth.

## Gardening basics

Even if you live in a heavily urbanised area where glass and concrete are main dominant materials without much green and free space, there are many ways you can use your available resources to start gardening and growing plants.

<sup>1</sup> <https://odlandestadsbasarer.se/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/CityFresh-Rapport-Slutversion.pdf>

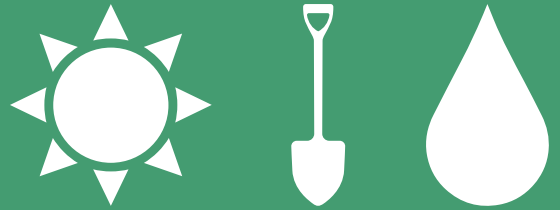
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ambius.com/blog/urban-gardening-tips/>





There are three main elements you will need to start gardening:

- Sun – 6-8 hours per day
- Soil – quality soil for gardening
- Water – not too much



Add to it:

- Fertilisers – choose organic compost or try to make it yourself ☺
- Containers – deep enough for roots developing and with holes to drain excess of water.

## Svalbard Global Seed Vault

Way up north, in the permafrost, 1300 kilometers beyond the Arctic Circle, is the world's largest secure seed storage, opened by the Norwegian Government in February 2008. From all across the globe, crates of seeds are sent here for safe and secure long-term storage in cold and dry rock vaults.<sup>3</sup>



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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/food-fisheries-and-agriculture/svalbard-global-seed-vault/id462220/>



**And do not forget seeds!** Invest in disease resistant organic seeds. Sometimes you can receive them for free at seeds exchange&swapping events. It contributes to biodiversity increasing variety of plants on our planet. **Don't have them in your neighbourhood? Then organise one yourself!**



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## Why organise a seed exchange?

1. Save money. When you buy a packet of seeds there are always more than you need, but if you exchange these with other people, for different seeds, you get twice the range of seeds from your original investment.
2. Grow new plants. You'll pick up ideas to grow new plants and vegetables which you might not have thought of before.
3. Get growing tips. It's not just about exchanging seeds but about meeting other growers in the community and swapping ideas and advice on how to look after those plants, or even how to cook them.
4. Fundraise for a project. You could organise the seed exchange so that each person makes a small donation for the seeds that they take.<sup>3</sup>

You can also try to make your own soil by composting organic waste and scrap. However, it may take time and needs some practice.

You can try to make compost indoors in a small plastic or cardboard container. There are plenty of ideas for DIY compost box on the Internet.

And we have not yet mentioned the space and containers, but given below examples from different countries can give you a good idea of what you can use or make yourself. Be creative!

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.edenproject.com/learn/for-everyone/organise-a-seed-exchange>





## How to make compost:

1. Start your compost pile on bare earth. This allows worms and other beneficial organisms to aerate.
2. Lay twigs or straw first, a few inches deep. This aids drainage and helps aerate the pile.
3. Add compost materials in layers, alternating moist and dry. Moist ingredients are food scraps, tea bags, etc. Dry materials are straw, leaves and wood ashes.
4. Add manure, green manure (clover, buckwheat, grass clippings) or any nitrogen source. This activates the compost pile and speeds the process along.
5. Keep compost moist. Water occasionally, or let rain do the job.
6. Cover with anything you have – wood, plastic sheeting, carpet scraps. Covering helps retain moisture, heat and prevents from being over-watered by rain.
7. Turn. Every few weeks give the pile a quick turn with a shovel. Oxygen is required for the process to work, and turning “adds” oxygen. Once you’ve established your compost pile, add new materials by mixing them in, rather than by adding them in layers.<sup>4</sup>



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<sup>4</sup> <https://learn.eartheasy.com/guides/composting/#howtocompost>





# Urban Gardening in Hungary

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# Introduction

In Hungary we have a **Contemporary Architecture Centre** named **KÉK** that has been engaged in the naturalisation and distribution of community gardens. The latter already have decades of tradition in Western Europe and the American continent. This center worked for the movement that is mostly self-organised by today. Its methodology, legal background and models are adaptable to the Hungarian environment. It also supported the development of a gardening base for education, consultancy and design.

Between 2010-2012 in Hungary a concept of community gardens was launched. It was broadly distributed to raise awareness of the initiative. The center recruited future gardeners and the followers of the movement through communication channels and complementary programmes. At the next step the center realised that it was indispensable to plan and develop exemplary gardens. Getting motivated by examples from overseas and in other European cities (London, Berlin, etc.) they put faith in the realisation of these gardens which resulted in a wide social movement. In September 2011, the Lecsós Kert started in the Millenaris Park as part of an awareness raising community programme and in March 2012, after the winter frosts, the plots were distributed. Since then a lot of communities have created their own gardens following in the center's footsteps.



Across Hungary we have different community gardens, **KÉK**, as a professional partner, has taken part in the development of several community and school gardens in the capital and in the country. Currently it runs five community gardens.

Another example is Leonardo Kert supported by Futureal, Kerthatár Közösségi Kert and the Csárdás Kert with the help of Magyar Telekom, and Kisdiófa Kert with the cooperation of the local government of Erzsébetváros are encouraging city residents who wish to engage in gardening.

At the end of 2016 the IBIS garden, opened in the beautiful park of Aero Budapest Hotel, was a true rarity, which was a community initiative, one of its kind.





The existing gardens have to be developed further, but they already provide gardening opportunities for almost 800 city residents, and in addition, they serve other social functions.

The garden works as a meeting point, a cultural-communal space, an innovative platform to test and distribute different liveable and sustainable urban equipments, solutions.

The local projects aim to share knowledge from urban gardens that was gathered during the past years, public information and the useful experience of generations.

The plan is to provide a platform where community gardens, their gardeners and people curious about the topic could find each other and become participants of a bigger community.

We believe that the good example of an individual is easy-to-follow, we contribute to the improvement of the microclimate of our residential area and our city by promoting an environmentally friendly and sustainable lifestyle.<sup>1</sup>

Saying that we have also collected seven great examples of urban gardening in Hungary that we will present below.

## Aquaponic gardening Szeged



**Aquaponics garden in Szeged** is a combination of aquaculture.

Aquaponics is the raising of fish and plants in a recirculating ecosystem.

The fish waste provides nutrients for the plants. Bacteria and plants help to clean the water for the fish. The future of urban food starts with education.

We have **youth** involved in the process who know the importance of the method. Aquaponics can grow a tremendous amount of food with a fraction of the water that is normally used in soil-based agriculture.

Additionally, the **local youth** and students can study fish, plants and bacteria interacting in a living ecosystem. Aquaponics is the perfect teaching tool for core subjects like maths, biology, chemistry and engineering. Students are performing water quality tests, measuring and tracking growth rates in fish and plants. Currently the **youth team** works on the implementation of the Aquaponic system into the school area.

Aquaponic Gardening is a great example that food can be grown directly in our communities, providing access to nutritious food, creating jobs and eliminating the huge carbon footprint associated with food transportation miles.

<sup>1</sup> <http://kozossegekertek.hu/en/angol-oldal-1/>





# Buda - community garden

It is a place in Budapest where youth do the planning together. Together youth and adults are planting different types of vegetables and flowers, discovering new ways to improve City gardening, and networking with gardening enthusiasts. Community gardens are simply living green surfaces in the texture of the City. They have a lot of different functions: community events, environment protection, healthcare, education and modern scenes for community culture. In addition to that they serve as areas for relaxation and recreation, live green islands in the concrete landscape. Additionally, vegetables could be grown there.

Urban gardening also has potential to get together youth with different socio-cultural backgrounds. Gardeners acquire new skills and knowledge from common gardening and it could be applied in other areas of their life. Community gardeners have a growing sense of contribution and responsibility, they could be even seen as environmentally conscious, respectful residents of the City.





# Budapest Práter residency



This is a Balcony gardening example by Zsolt. It demonstrates that despite being young, it is possible to grow ecological vegetables on your own balcony in Budapest. The process started during the first year at the University. First it was just an idea shared with colleagues. In the beginning, there were only flowers, but later he also added vegetables. Having noticed that home vegetables like tomatoes have a totally different taste, he understood the difference and importance of home balcony

gardening. By that modest project, I would like to improve the urban gardening level in my community and contribute with my example.



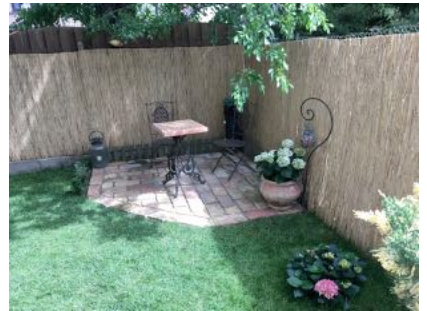


# Szeged city home garden

Here we have a garden located in town Szeged – a great example showing that we can cultivate in the home yard. A masterpiece of colors and varieties of plants. It is a family farming system that involves their children in the activity. Being located in the town and having a home yard, they decided to arrange the ecosystem with the help from local youth interested in gardening. It gave them a chance to practice cultivation and take a fresh breath while enjoying the beautiful views. After a while, the owners discovered that bees began to frequent the garden to collect pollen.

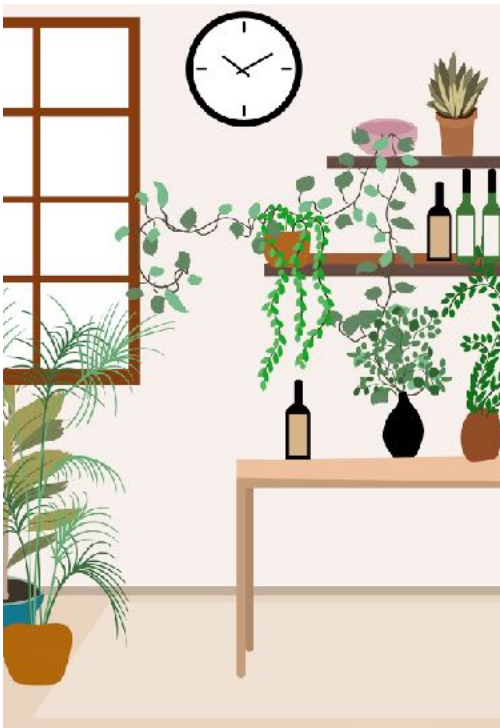








# Student apartment gardening



This example is offered by a volunteer who is growing plants and flowers on the balcony and in his room. He meets us with a question:

–We always wonder, can we really do gardening in our apartment living in the city? And the answer is definitely **YES**, as there are always innovative ideas to be found.

We can have different flowers in the room, and on the balcony we can have some easy plants that can be microgreens, lettuce, tomatoes and basil. Microgreens provide lots of options for growing delicious and nutritious sprouts on a small space. Lettuce doesn't get too tall, and there are miniature tomato varieties that stay compact. Basil and other herbs can grow without taking up too much room. The cans from olives can be used as pots. The rest is the matter of your imagination and creativity.





# Urban gardening in residential areas



This example is well connected with the example of Szeged city home garden. That represents gardening between the buildings in the city. The plots are cultivated by locals who live there. They involve everyone basically starting from children and teenagers, making it a learning process conveying their knowledge and ideas to the new generations. This project helps to discover new methods and ideas for **urban gardening**, making it more successful and time-efficient for all members of the community.







# Urban Gardening in Italy

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# Urban gardening in Italy

In Italy, urban gardens were born in the middle of the Second World War when a campaign was launched to transform all the public green areas into spaces available to grow vegetables and legumes<sup>1</sup>, with the ultimate goal not to leave even a strip of land uncultivated to supply the lack of reduced production caused by the war.



Photo 1 and 2: Wheat cultivation in the streets, © «Il Resto del Carlino», 17/06 and 19/12 1942

After the Fascist period, there are no longer traces of similar associative initiatives, up to the present day, where the situation seems to have changed, in fact in 2011, it became possible to participate in similar initiatives only in large cities, in 2013 according to a research of Coldiretti<sup>2</sup>, the land dedicated to these initiatives had reached 3.3 million square meters of land, up to 2015 having more than 46% of Italians cultivating green spaces.

This experiment, born parallel in several European countries, evolved over time and, due to the lockdown suffered during the 2020, reached the number of 1.2 million Italians cultivating their small urban gardens to have vegetables, fresh legumes and spending time and working together outdoors<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> [https://guerrainfame.it/orti\\_di\\_guerra](https://guerrainfame.it/orti_di_guerra)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.coldiretti.it/tag/orti-urbani>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.coldiretti.it/economia/coronavirus-via-libera-agli-orti-di-guerra-per-12-mln-di-italiani>



Among the typologies of urban gardens now flourishing in Italy we have:

- **Shared Gardens:** They are organised realities, where the different users use the same agricultural areas that are divided, sharing the same structure, tools and common areas.

- **Balcony and terrace gardens:** They are gardens of individual citizens who creatively exploit balconies, terraces and condominium areas for cultivation.

- **Educational gardens:** These are spaces where children can learn how to sow and watch vegetables grow, plant and learn how to grow vegetables. Pupils can

observe nature, with its rhythms, the cycle of the seasons and can try their hand at manual activities that stimulate new skills. These gardens are very useful for teaching group work and for involving children with disabilities.

- **Company gardens:** A new form of CSR and Corporate volunteering has been developed, companies are adopting green areas next to their facilities where their employees, during working hours, can take care of gardening, planting trees promoting socialisation among colleagues.





# Project of the Vertical Gardens

The latest project, recently announced, is the “Vertical Garden” in Milano<sup>4</sup>: a solution adopted for the “Pirellino”, a skyscraper in the financial area of Milano that will allow the inhabitants to cultivate on the facades of the structure and grow many varieties of plants including those for food purposes. These buildings combine aesthetic advantages, in addition to absorbing ultraviolet rays, carbon dioxide and heat with an evident energy saving, this project is considered to be the evolution of the “Vertical Forest”, a project of requalification of two buildings now hosting houses and offices and more than 900 trees.



Project of the Vertical Gardens - Milano © gamberorosso.it

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gamberorosso.it/notizie/il-rilancio-di-pirelli-39-a-milano-dopo-il-bosco-verticale-stefano-boeri-progetta-lorto-verticale>



# Circular urban kitchen garden in Rome

In Rome one of the most famous examples are the Garbatella Urban Gardens<sup>5</sup>: 25 cultivated gardens where young couples, families and associations grow their vegetables without the use of chemical products.

This garden includes not only the production of vegetables, but it has been planned as a circular experience: in the same area there is the production of vegetables and fruits, a small market selling the products and an area with a composter where the green wastes of the gardens and the market are transformed into fertiliser used in the same gardens.

What is more, there is an area dedicated to beekeeping: the bees consume flowers of the trees and plants growing in the garden. Out of the nectar of the flowers the bees produce honey that is collected and boxed by a group of local people who co-manage that activity.



© Orti Urbani - Garbatella

<sup>5</sup> <https://ortiurbanigarbatella.noblogs.org>



In addition to the production and reuse of the vegetable waste there is an area dedicated to educational projects: the children living in the area are taking part in workshops on the themes of cultivation of fruits and vegetables, the composition of an ecosystem and the relationship between humans and the environment. In that way the new generations of urban gardeners are prepared to adopt plots of land to continue nurturing the urban gardening experience.



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# Urban beekeeping

The urban beekeeping<sup>6</sup> practice has more than 100 years of history in Italy, the first project was implemented back in 1906 in Turin, for almost a century it has been a minor activity, the urban environment was not the best one for bees that were having their natural environment clean and well preserved. During the last decades, as a paradox, bees started to occupy a more friendly environment in urban parks and green areas because there is no chemical products, typical for industrial agriculture, used on trees and flowers.

In the cities, bees find food in the parks, on trees placed in the streets, on terraces and balconies and in the gardens. In the urban environment, bees find great variety and availability of flowers of different species and types. It is even believed that the amount of honey produced by a family of bees in the city is higher than that produced in rural areas.

Similar experiment in Rome started in 2017 in the Urban Garden<sup>7</sup> of the VIII Municipio di Roma where the bees found a variety of flowers and plants in the urban garden, contributing also with their presence to the flourishing and fruit/vegetables production. Moreover, their presence contributes to the positive transformation of the urban space as an area where nature is completely excluded, but where both could mix.

This experiment in Rome attracts more and more enthusiasts because it's not managed only by professional beekeepers, but the activity was adopted by the residents. Mostly young people are trained by the experts to co-manage the hives and the production of honey, adding also a relevant social aspect to this activity.

As a quality check of the produced honey the Università di Tor Vergata analysed some samples and found no traces of chemical products and the analysis of heavy metals reported negligible quantities of lead and cadmium. That means that the honey produced in a densely inhabited urban area such as Rome is safe to consume and has no negative influence from the city pollution. As a counter effect, it means that the bees adapted to live even better in an urban space, free from pesticides used in agricultural production.



<sup>6</sup> <https://www.apicolturaurbana.it>

<sup>7</sup> <https://apiurbanegarbatella.noblogs.or>



## DIY and recycling

During the forced lockdown caused by the pandemic emergency our team kept in contact to exchange experiences and ideas on how to continue what we all missed – the contact with nature. Most of our members, living in flat and urban areas, couldn't benefit from a nearby green area, shopping groceries was always very uncomfortable due to long queues and short time available. And exactly in this situation we experimented with growing something using the limited amount of space and materials.



Vegetables grown from remaining seeds - © Nous

We decided to grow some hot peppers from the seeds that we collected from food leftovers. We took the seeds from spicy peppers, dried them a bit under the sun and then planted them in potting soil, placing the pots in direct sunlight outdoors.

**TIPS:** if the weather is still cold they can be kept on a shelf next to a window to get light and then moved out.



When the plants were tall enough, we moved them into a larger pot to make them grow until they bloomed and produced fruits.

**TIPS:** saving some seeds from your own cultivated vegetables and plants will make this production cycle repeat annually.

Ginger root can also be grown by planting a piece of ginger root that has a little green bud. Place it in the potting soil or water with the buds facing up. After some weeks of keeping the soil moisture and in light (not under direct sunlights), plant new buds and new roots growing from that cultivated piece: from this part a new root will grow that can be collected, used and re-planted to keep this process going,



Turnips growing in an egg-container - © Nous

For the plantation and the sprouting of seeds we decided to use the empty egg containers made in biodegradable paper: in each hole we placed a small amount of soil and 1-2 seeds. After 1-2 weeks of keeping the soil moist and in a sunny place, the seeds began to sprout and the small plants grew. When they become big enough to be planted, we will place the whole container that will melt into the soil and keep the small plants on the right distance for growing.

Another way to recycle the seeds, such as garlic, sunflowers, beans, lentils, peas, is to produce edible sprouts, to do that you need a glass jar, a gauze or fine mesh and a rubber band. Pour a spoon of seeds into the jar then fill it with water about halfway and leave the seeds to soak for 6-12 hours, leaving the jar in the dark and without a lid. After soaking, the jar should be covered with gauze or the net, which should be fixed with the elastic around the mouth. At that point the water must be drained completely, repeating this process twice per day will make the sprouts grow from the seeds and, keeping them in a cool place away from light, will make the sprouts reach the right size to be eaten.



Home lentils sprout growing - © Nous

A healthy, time and space-saving ingredient to be added to your diet!





© Nous



© Nous



© Nous



# Urban Gardening in the Netherlands

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# Introduction

In the Netherlands the education system, especially primary education, is closely connected with gardening practices. Almost every city and rural area schools have their own gardens. The idea of farming small plots of land isn't new to the Dutch.<sup>1</sup> The country distributed its first allotment gardens to working-class families in 1838, so people could grow their own vegetables. Today there are a lot of possibilities for children and youth to get involved in urban gardening.<sup>2</sup>



© YIC

Over 6,000 such units in Amsterdam are now used primarily for recreation, but there are still a lot of keen veg growers about. School gardens are a common part of primary school life. For example Amsterdam has 13 official school gardens registered, but many other schools work together with community gardens to give their pupils a sense of the soil. Local schools aren't alone in seeing the value of teaching their students about agriculture. Lynn Shore, who manages a herb garden in the west of the city, also teaches at the British School of Amsterdam. 'Sometimes I find that it helps to reach pupils after they spend some time in nature, just playing in the mud,' she says.



© YIC

In general, youth is actively involved in making the living environment greener, more sustainable and healthier. Thus, social changers and health specialists came up with an idea of The Green Place Makers that was honoured by the innovation fund of the GGD Hart voor Brabant. The approach resulted in an action plan that included young people and was implemented together with them. No theoretical approach, but mainly looking for and applying new ideas and initiatives in practice. In that way, young people could make an active and meaningful contribution to a healthy, green and climate-adaptive living environment. The Green Place Makers together with NGO Nature For Health<sup>3</sup> help governments, organisations and residents to use nature for the well-being. They suggest to get engaged<sup>4</sup> in one of the neighbourhood vegetable gardens and help make the neighbourhood more lively and healthier. Weekly work is done at fixed times by a group of participants under professional supervision. The jobs vary from working with plants to painting, building with wood, drawing up sowing schedules or following / organising workshops. In each municipality there are small plots of land next to the residential area. That belongs to all neighbours and there they can grow what they wish.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dutchnews.nl/features/2016/10/green-fingers-in-the-city-urban-farming-in-amsterdam/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.rova.nl/leren-en-doen/pagina/1341/jeugdteuinen>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nahf.nl/de-groene-plaatsmakers/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://groengoedrotterdam.com/category/tuin-op-hofbogen/>





**TIPS:** If you want a small plot to begin gardening, you can ask for it from:

- municipality
- neighbours
- gardening associations
- specialised gardening shops/markets.



© YIC

Popularity of gardening between youth encourages to develop courses like The Urban Food Experience. According to Jan-Eelco Jansma, a researcher in urban-rural relations at Wageningen University, consumers started to become more and more interested in where their food came from 10 years ago. Farmers<sup>5</sup>, meanwhile, began to realise that selling their produce locally reduced transportation costs and was thus more economically attractive. As concerns grew about climate change and food security, more and more residents in Amsterdam began to grow their own food.



© YIC

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.dutchnews.nl/features/2016/10/green-fingers-in-the-city-urban-farming-in-amsterdam/>





# Balcony gardening

Dutch gardening culture is very well known. The Netherlands as one of the biggest distributors of flowers and vegetables (the second biggest exporter of farm food after the US) also has plenty of seeds and bulbs. That's why in each city and village you can find examples of urban gardening. Naturally, most urban gardening examples involving youth could be found in big cities.

Why? Because a lot of foreigner students bring their nostalgic experience of gardening. They start growing vegetables and flowers in the apartments and on the balcony.

Why should I start with (balcony) gardening? Balcony gardening has several benefits – using free space to grow your own vegetables and flowers, to stimulate circular economy principles, to make nicer views, to freshen air, to stimulate healthy lifestyle.

You can find inspiring examples on the following bloggers' pages:

"I grew<sup>6</sup> my tomatoes upside down. Have you heard of this yet? It's a great space saver. I got the idea because my Aunt Sharon did it a couple years ago and had success with it. You grow the plants from seed, and when they get their first true leaves (plant is maybe 10-15cm tall), you transplant them into a bucket with holes cut out in the bottom. It's a two person job. One person has to hold the bucket up (once the plant's root balls are placed upside down into the holes), and the other fills the bucket with soil. The benefit is that you don't need to stake the plant, and the water goes straight to the roots. The plants have lots of little green cherry tomatoes waiting to ripen, if only that goddamn sun would shine. SIGH"



<sup>6</sup> <https://amansterdam.wordpress.com/category/balcony-gardening/>





# Examples of urban food-growing practice in Amsterdam

The largest rooftop garden in Europe is located in Amsterdam and has an area of more than 3000 m<sup>2</sup> full of vegetables and flowers. Zuidpark<sup>7</sup> the office building, with its very special roof, can be quite inspirational. More than 60 different varieties of plants have been grown organically. The combination of plants/veggies takes into account the seasons: there are always flowering plants, and there is always something ripe. Annuals are mixed with perennials.

On the one hand, there are positive effects on the environmental conditions mentioned: on what was once a rooftop desert, there are now plants. Even if only on some parts of the roof – supporting humidification and retention of rain water.

On the other hand, there are also the positive effects of urban farming as creating urban food production close to consumers. Avoiding long transport distances help fresh fruits and vegetables come straight to the table. Organic production also makes the employees aware of a sustainable and ecological basis of everyday life. It contributes positively to the quality of working conditions of the employees. It also supports the communication between employees and between enterprises based there.



**TIPS:** First decide the size of your garden. That will help you to choose the right plants before buying them.

<sup>7</sup> <https://biotope-city.net/urban-farming-bureaus-zuidpark-in-amsterdam/>





# Examples of urban food-growing practice in the Hague<sup>8</sup>

The New Farm is an international hub<sup>9</sup> for smart urban food solutions and green awareness. There is a whole new world, a sustainable world where smart cities can feed a growing global population. With ground-breaking research, technological innovations, exhibitions and education, The New Farm demonstrates that the Netherlands is the place to be for new disruptive, vertical solutions in urban farming.

At the top of an empty 1950s office block that once belonged to the Dutch telecommunications powerhouse Philips, above an abandoned reception desk and six floors of vacant office space, there is a field of green. There, on a concrete building in The Hague, a modern experiment takes place: Europe's largest urban farm. Tomatoes, vegetables and trendy "microgreens" are sprouting in a sprawling 1,200 square metre rooftop greenhouse. Below, on the fishy-smelling sixth floor, is a huge fish farm.

The rather post-apocalyptically named UF002 De Schilde to be launched soon (the UF refers to UrbanFarmers, the company behind the farm). The eventual hope is to provide for 900 local families, plus restaurants and a cooking school, with 500 tilapia a week and 50 tonnes of rooftop veg a year.



<sup>8</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/apr/27/inside-europes-biggest-urban-farm>

<sup>9</sup> <http://thenewfarm.nl/en/>





# Urban garden initiatives in the Netherlands

Almost in each municipality one day per week there is a market where one can buy products from the local farmers. Also you can find Urban Garden shops in the bigger cities.

There are also lots of citizens' initiatives taking place. For instance, Hilversum<sup>10</sup> residents' initiative. Founded to make Hilversum greener, healthier and cozier. They transform unused land into flowering vegetable gardens, where local residents can grow their own fruit and vegetables. People come into contact with each other again in the gardens. Young and old learn how vegetables are grown. All kinds of fun activities are organised, such as cooking with the harvest and workshops growing vegetables. Together they create green oases in the city, where Hilversummers come together and are actively involved in green, health, sustainability and nutrition. They teach (school) children in vegetable gardens, so that all children have the opportunity to be involved with nature and know where their food comes from. In Limburg exist 'De Urban Gardening Winkel'<sup>11</sup> shop where you can buy ecological and fresh things. DIY Amsterdam Forum: Gardening, composting + more Facebook group<sup>12</sup>.

**TIPS:** Join facebook DIY groups where you get the possibility to exchange seeds, ideas and pictures. Pay attention whether it is perennial or annual seeds when you invest in them.



© YIC



© YIC

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.urbanfarming035.nl/over-ons/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.limburg.com/bedrijf/groene-start/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/groups/diy.amsterdam>





# Urban Gardening in Poland

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# Introduction

In Poland, urban gardening is represented mainly as allotment gardens that until recently were perceived mainly as a remnant of the communist regime. However, the tradition of allotment gardens in Poland is very long. Its roots date back to 1824. The oldest garden in Grudziąd, was established in 1897 and functioned from the very beginning as an allotment garden. The greatest development of allotment gardening in Poland took place during the period of urbanisation of the country, i.e. the 20th century. In 1918, there were 19 gardens with 2064 plots, with a total area of 70.2 ha. In 1939, there were already 606 gardens - almost 50,000 plots at that time covered over 3,000 ha. Their main function at that time was the production of vegetables and fruit, especially in gardens organised for the unemployed.



© National digital archive, Poland



© National digital archive, Poland

Despite numerous attempts to abolish it, there are still 4929 family allotments in Poland with an area of 43,350 ha, with almost a million plots (965,328). It is estimated that nearly 4 million people use the plots together with members of the immediate family of allotment owners. This environment is very diverse. It includes representatives of all social and professional groups, people of different age, social and professional status.

Recent years, the cultivation of plants in urban areas has been gathering many supporters. That resulted in the increase, among other forms, of community gardens. In Poland, a model of a community garden is gaining popularity. An informal group (e.g. friends, neighbours) leases land for a garden (e.g. from the family allotment gardens or in another urban area) and cultivates it together. Such a garden serves the specific purposes of a closed group of people (e.g. cultivating vegetables organically or creating a safe outdoor play area for your children). In November 2017, 15 community gardens operated in Warsaw, and another 10 were in a setting-up phase. Enthusiastic activists established the city-wide Council of Social Gardens.



## Bujna Warszawa (Luxuriant Warsaw)

The Bujna Warszawa programme was created in order to support the residents of Warsaw in establishing and developing **community gardens**.



The last decade has brought a flourishing of grassroots activities for Warsaw greenery. Thanks to the efforts of many groups of residents, institutions and organisations, places as diverse as wastelands, town squares, neglected lawns, park corners, neighbourhood greeneries and allotment gardens have acquired a new social dimension.

In 2017, Warsaw's Greenery Authority initiated the process of studying the needs of Warsaw gardeners involved in creating community gardens. The purpose of the meetings was primarily to develop solutions that enable the expansion of community gardening in Warsaw.

Bujna Warszawa satisfies the needs of various entities that are transforming the city landscape and, from the very beginning, it encourages residents to co-create this change. The participants and creators of the programme are members of informal groups and allotment gardens, as well as cultural institutions and local community centers.

### What is a community garden?

Although no precise definition or single model of a community garden has been developed, such gardens do share many characteristics. The most important features are openness and community involvement. Future garden users engage in the process of shaping the space, often at the earliest stage of design; the members of the garden-based community set the rules of use, establish beds and paths, build houses for small



© Bujna Warszawa

and large animals, set up small architecture and garden infrastructure, such as arbors, compost bins or rainwater tanks. The participation of residents in creating a garden largely determines the spirit of these spaces. Gardeners, often relying on second-hand materials, adapting known patterns according to the needs of the local environment and their own preferences, co-create places with an informal, friendly character, in a manner that is halfway between work and play. And they are friendly not only to people. In many community gardens conditions are excellent for wildlife: singing birds, small mammals, melliferous plants and microscopic inhabitants of the soil. Community gardens are also spaces for many activities not strictly related to gardening; educational and cultural events, various workshops, picnics, gatherings, concerts and feasts can all take place in gardens made by the community, for the community.



# Podwórka z natury (backyards by nature)



© Maria Dusza

The "Podwórka z Natury" program is about inviting residents to co-decide about the look of the space around their place of residence. In the first stage of the program implementation, the residents work on the concept of landscaping the yard, and in the next stage, joint work is carried out. The program is implemented in the area covered by the Municipal Revitalisation Program of Olsztyn 2020.

These are highly urbanised areas, and the development of backyards by introducing greenery is a response to the problems of this type of areas and supports the implementation of municipal policies in the field of sustainable development:

- adaptation to climate change and air protection: the high proportion of green areas in the dense development of downtown Olsztyn increases the so-called small retention, limiting the phenomenon of flooding buildings during violent rainfalls, promotes the elimination of the so-called "heat islands", allows the management of rainwater in the place of its fall, contributes to the improvement of air quality,
- parking policy: landscaping makes it impossible to park "wild" in the city center, outside the Paid Parking Zone, which allows you to regulate the number of vehicles entering city centers,
- educating residents in the field of waste segregation,
- building a civil society - integrating and strengthening the activity of residents and developing a sense of influence on the place where they live.



© Official website of Olsztyn Municipality

Within the local communities participating in the program, new relations were established, and neighbourly ties became stronger. Residents, despite the termination of participation in the program, continue to co-create their space, showing activity in various ways: they apply for grants from external funds for its development. They independently take care of the existing greenery, enrich it with new plantings, elements of small architecture or objects of art. Some of the backyards were given their unique names, and residents continue to report on their activities on social media.

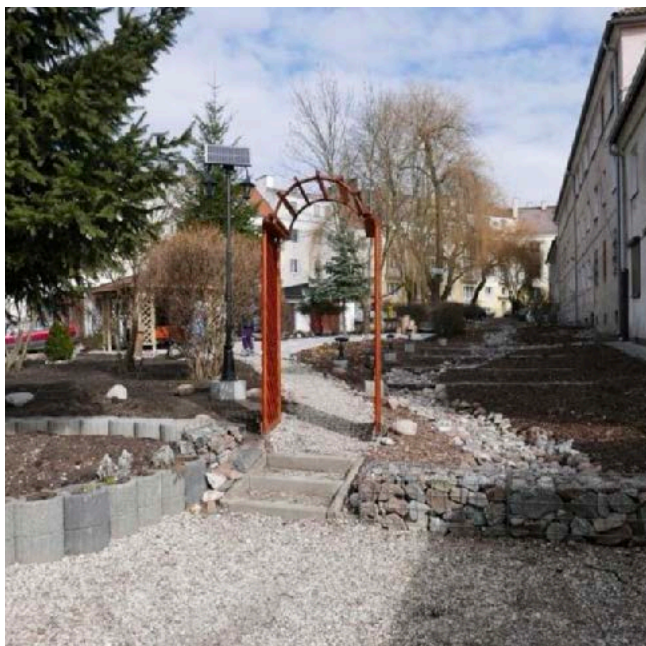
## Reference links:

<https://www.facebook.com/Nasze-Podw%C3%B3rko-2298357407120568>

<https://www.facebook.com/ZaulekOptymistow>

<https://www.facebook.com/ogrodrodziewiczowny>





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## Łąki kwietne w Olsztynie (Flower meadows in Olsztyn)



Project is developed under a communal budget of Olsztyn City. Flower meadows appear in the cities all over Poland. They are created mainly to help insects stay outside their natural environment, where they are hunted by various predators or to avoid plants sprayed with insecticidal substances. Flower meadows are one of the ideas of ecologists to stop the extinction of insects.

© Courtesy of Zarząd Dróg Zieleni i Transportu of Olsztyn Municipality

They help protect the environment, cool the air and become water reservoirs. Flowers such as cornflowers, poppies, yarrow and golden shadows are planned to grow in the meadows. There will also be a hotel for insects. It implies houses mounted on two wooden poles, approximately 50 cm above the ground. The back will be covered with boards, while the front will be open, secured with a net without sharp edges. The hotel will be divided into 9 accommodation units.



© Courtesy of Zarząd Dróg Zieleni i Transportu of Olsztyn Municipality



## Mikrowarzywa z Warmii (Microgreens from Warmia)

Mikrowarzywa z Warmii is an urban farm specialising in ecological cultivation of microgreens.

Microgreens are very young plants of various vegetables, herbs and flowers. They are the next growth phase of a plant after sprout, where hypocotyls and cotyledons are fully developed. They are characterised by their intense flavour. Thanks to their high nutrition value they are classified as SuperFoods. Microgreens contain dozens of times the amount of vitamins than their mature counterparts. They are cultivated in sterile rooms with a controlled environment. Being able to control temperature, humidity and lighting allows to create a product of exceptional quality, and maximum nutritional value. In addition to that cultivation is completely eco-friendly. Because of that, every microgreen is 100% safe, and can be safely included in diets of children that are just starting to learn to eat solid food.



© Official website Mikrowarzywa

In recent years, the nutritional value of various foods, even the unprocessed ones, has dwindled. The mission is to develop healthy food regimes in the society. The packaging used during the production is eco-friendly. Being aware of our natural environment, it is Mikrowarzywa's goal to minimise the amount of waste produced during the cultivation.

They offer such species as: sunflower, peas, coriander, Japanese mizuna, cabbage, borage, radish and many others.

In order for the product to be of the highest quality and freshness, their cultivation takes place on order in specific cultivation cycles.



## Knowledge base on urban gardening in Poland

1. Portal about urban gardening, (Kraków) <https://inspekty.pl/> (Kraków)
2. Backyards by nature - Rain gardens (Olsztyn)
  - a) Nasze Podwórko (Żeromskiego/ Sienkiewicza) – photo <https://www.facebook.com/Nasze-Podw%C3%B3rko-2298357407120568>
  - b) Kolejowa/ Sienkiewicza – photo
  - c) Zaulek Optymistów (Puszkina/ Jagiellońska/ Żeromskiego) – photo
3. Community Gardens
  - a) Ogród Rodziewiczówny (Olsztyn) <https://www.facebook.com/ogrodrodziewiczowny>
  - b) Macierzanki (Kraków) [https://www.facebook.com/krakowskiogrodspolecznychmacierzanki/?comment\\_id=Y29tbWVudDoyMzQyMTg1Njg5NDI4OTg1XzIzNDIzMzE3MDI3NDc3MTc%3D](https://www.facebook.com/krakowskiogrodspolecznychmacierzanki/?comment_id=Y29tbWVudDoyMzQyMTg1Njg5NDI4OTg1XzIzNDIzMzE3MDI3NDc3MTc%3D)
  - c) Zasiejówka (Warszawa) – family allotment gardens areas <https://www.facebook.com/100465424845542/posts/154318796126871/>
  - d) Wolna Wisła (Toruń)
  - e) Służewski Dom Kultury (Warszawa) – community garden <https://www.facebook.com/wspolnyogrodsdk>
4. Natural playgrounds and „no-playgrounds”
  - a) Za torami pod Lipami (Olsztyn) – photo <https://www.facebook.com/zatoramipodlipami/>
  - b) Warszawa Las Kabacki <https://www.pracowniak.pl/lesny-plac-zabaw/>
5. Family allotment gardens Olsztyn <http://rodkoperniknaskarpie.pl/>
6. Permaculture
  - a) Skolity (Świątki) -it is a village but big knowledge base <https://www.facebook.com/ogrodpermakulturaskolity/>

- b) Kraków <https://www.ogrod.krakow.pl/miejska-permakultura/>
- c) Permaculture, aquaponics <https://lukasznowacki.pl/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/Permakulturadlakazdego>
- d) Map of permacultures w PL <https://permakultura.edu.pl/>

#### 7. Flower meadows and hives

- a) City honeys <https://wcinaj-miod.pl/miod-miejski/>  
<https://semini.pl/co-jedza-pszczoly-wmiescie/>  
Apiaries in Warsaw <https://sklep.pszczelarium.pl/>  
Apiaries in Kielce <https://wkielcach.info/aktualnosci/kieleckie-pszczoly-wyprodukowaly-pierwszy-miod-jak-sie-maja-miejskie-pasieki/>

#### 8. Weed eating popularization

- a) <https://www.kalendarrolnikow.pl/1844/kulinarna-przygoda-z-chwastami-czyli-zerzenie-prosto-z-pol-i-lak>
- b) <https://zielonyogrodek.pl/dom-i-balkon/kuchnia-z-ogrodka/9328-jadalne-chwasty-kture-dzikiem-rosliny-mozesz-zjesc>
- c) "Delicious Weeds" workshop <https://www.facebook.com/events/307911443198295/>
- d) provisions <https://fooder.pl/etykiety/jadalne-chwasty>

#### 9. Urban planning and shaping of urban spaces, including urban agriculture in Poland

- a) <https://www.facebook.com/urbnews>
- b) <https://urbanlab.net/>



A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a black plastic seedling tray. The tray contains several small, vibrant green leafy plants, likely radishes or similar vegetables, growing in individual compartments. The person holding the tray is wearing a purple shirt, and their face is partially visible in the background, which is softly blurred. The overall scene is bright and outdoors, suggesting a garden or nursery setting.

# Urban Gardening in Sweden

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# Introduction

Urban gardening has been an important element of Swedish cities for a very long time. Current trend expands to many cities, municipalities and smaller communities providing a broad variety of examples and possibilities to practice farming and gardening in a city environment.

Sustainable design, construction, and urban planning are also a huge priority for the country, with an emphasis on using natural resources responsibly, efficiently, and renewably.<sup>1</sup>

In many Swedish communities and city districts the gardening and food growing projects of different forms are often used for integration and decrease of exclusion, building common ground for understanding and dialogue, engaging kids and youth as well as seniors. Young people have the possibility to test both gardening and farming without purchase of tools and machinery as that is lent to them. Guidance and support is also provided. Those engaged in gardening reflect on enjoying outdoor activities, increasing mental and physical well being, and developing their social network and contacts.

Different gardening associations are active all over the country, offering its members plots of land, support and mutual activities.

The Swedish municipalities and towns have different regulations and provide different possibilities. However, there is a definite possibility for urban gardening and food farming all over Sweden, be it the biggest cities such as Stockholm, Malmö, Gothenburg, Uppsala or smaller towns. In general, local initiatives find support and are encouraged. One can start gardening and growing food on municipal land that offers allotments for free or on a rent basis. As a rule, you have to be a registered resident of the municipality in question.

## For instance, city of Uppsala offers the following forms of cultivation:

**Cultivation area:** collective term for areas leased for leisure gardening.

**Colony garden:** land plot (200–500 square meters) that is leased and where a small cottage may be built.

**Cultivation plot / collective cultivation for private cultivation:** land plot that is leased for cultivation activities with no building rights.

**Urban cultivation, collective cultivation for common cultivation and other:** cultivation takes place on public site land in urban environments. Cultivation of a common nature means, for example, that everyone is welcome to harvest what is grown.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://greencitygrowers.com/blog/urban-farming-in-swedish-cities/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.uppsala.se/kultur-och-fritid/aktiviteter-motion-och-idrott/aktiviteter-och-fritidsgardar/odla-i-uppsala/#:~:text=Det%20finns%20olika%20former%20av,att%20du%20startar%20en%20f%C3%B6rening>



# Educational system



In Sweden learning gardening basics starts from a very early age. Kindergartens and schools install boxes for planting flowers, herbs, berries and vegetables in their yards. It teaches children taking care of their garden, contemplating the process of natural growth, respecting nature and food they consume.



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There are many gardening courses and study circles offered by different Folk-schools and associations. Such educational engagement continues further on high school level where you can apply for a degree in sustainable farming and gardening.



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## Urban gardening in Malmö

Malmö, the third-largest city in Sweden, has lots of possibilities and types of urban gardening provided by different actors, such as associations, municipalities, private initiatives and companies. You can find all of them on an interactive map of the web-site <https://stadsodlingmalmo.se/>

One of such places with focus on youth is **Guldängens construction and cultivation playground.**



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**Guldängen** was founded as a place for free play, creation and cultivation. Using their own hands and imagination, children and young people can construct their own meeting place in Gullängsparken. During summer, the place is open to the public and during the school year, activities are conducted in collaboration with schools and preschools.

The initiator of the operation is the non-profit association Växtväcket in collaboration with and support from Gatukontoret.

What is more, a few years ago Guldängen was granted a 3-year grant from the Allmänna Arvsfonden, with the aim of promoting integration for newly arrived and established children between 5-13 years from different areas in Malmö in order to strengthen their community and environmental commitment.

Today Guldängen serves as an outdoor educational destination for Malmö's students including preschool, primary school and after-school centers. Classes and leisure groups can book time and come for half a day with various outdoor pedagogical themes around carpentry and construction, cultivation, ecology, food and sustainability.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.vaxtvarket.se/guldangen/?fbclid=IwAR3AVOSyRQXrqun7Q\\_PsGrbqjHkW3gf7yvSaM2eQn0kCDpAU3LQxAWIYn20](https://www.vaxtvarket.se/guldangen/?fbclid=IwAR3AVOSyRQXrqun7Q_PsGrbqjHkW3gf7yvSaM2eQn0kCDpAU3LQxAWIYn20)



# Project Cultivating city bazaars

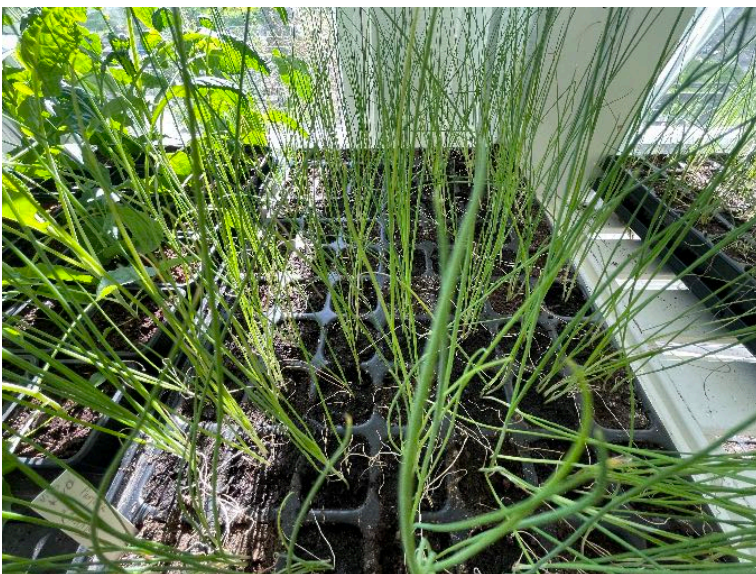


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The project Cultivating city bazaars in two Swedish cities – Landskrona and Stockholm is an innovation project. Its goal is to build a small-scale, sustainable industry through urban cultivation that creates new jobs and the opportunity to reach out to start-up companies focused on innovative environmental technology in big cities. The project is run by Nya Rågsveds Folkets Hus on the principle of a circular economy where non-profit, private and public work together in a unique partnership with the support of Vinnova.

**Cultivating city bazaars** is part of a growing global trend, driven by the realisation that large farms where crops grow in monoculture, far from consumers and marketplaces, destroy diversity and environment. Urban cultivation is spreading all over the world. The project aims to open up cities and conduct suburban, climate-safe cultivation in empty premises in order to create more vibrant and sustainable districts. Sustainability here is of prime focus.

**How does it look and work?** In unused underground spaces or industrial premises fresh salads, lettuce and mushrooms are being cultivated. The economic surplus from its sales is reinvested in social activities, thus creating a local, circular economy.



© More Mosaic

The project also meets modern challenges and aims to reduce water consumption, carbon dioxide emissions, food waste and long transportation. **Cultivating city bazaars** can offer locally grown, environmentally smart products of high quality to consumers, restaurants, cafés and shops reducing food waste through cultivation on demand.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> <https://odlandestadsbasarer.se/>





# Boodla



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**Boodla** is a small company based in Botkyrka municipality, Stockholm. It is based in a former private estate currently owned by the municipality. **Boodla** works innovatively with urban gardening and sees it as a tool to make city life better for its inhabitants.

Curiously, the name **Boodla** derives from two Swedish words *bo* and *odla* = *live* and *grow*.

Founders of **Boodla** made its mission not a profit per se, but a way of working and living to combine the concepts of sustainable gardening, food welfare and health with community, ecosystems and biodiversity as a whole.

**Boodla** prioritises regeneration of soil instead of pure exploitation regardless whether it works with own projects or on commission for private companies and state institutions.

Through recent years the company implemented various projects, including those involving children and youth. For instance, **Boodla** offered young people internships, collaborated with leisure centres and other youth organisations on the subject of sustainable gardening and farming. In the courses for youth it also harmonically integrates such issues as the green environment of the cities, climate knowledge, entrepreneurship and leadership.

“Gardening is a perfect tool for discussing many different issues and giving young people insight into how they themselves can contribute to and influence their living environment in a positive way”.

Boodla, Sweden







© Boodla

Today Boodla is a well-established company that besides its main activities, offers community and school gardening; workshops, lectures and courses on gardening and sustainability; seasonal vegetables subscription and possibility for people to join its activities setting hands in soil and learn more about gardening on a weekly basis.



© Boodla

“When relations are right, then you have a feeling of knowledge exchange, rather than Boodla teaching gardening. We know a great deal about things that youth often cannot and their perspectives are different from ours. But they are the ones who take the knowledge and make it relevant in their own lives. Regardless of which direction they choose in life, what they work with or where they live, we want them to have an understanding of ecosystems and that humans are part of nature. We cannot exist independently of our environment”.

**Learn more about Boodla activities here:** <https://boodla.se/>

## Terrace and kitchen garden



© More Mosaic

Lack of space or natural sunlight in Sweden is not an obstacle for gardening enthusiasts who want to cultivate their own plants and harvest food at home. Any tiny surface with natural or artificial light can be used effectively. Stockholm is known for his tiny apartments and lack of living space. However, it does not stop students from growing their own herbs in their modest accommodation, be it a dormitory or a room with a land-lord. And who will object to such appetising neighbours?





# Small domestic gardens



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Growing your own food, enjoying eco-products and being proud of your own green achievements are important motivating factors that facilitate interest in urban gardening. If not being practiced for economical reasons, gardening can stimulate a better mental and physical health, an obvious outdoor break from constant digital and computer activities.

Walking through bigger or smaller towns, one can always notice a small gardening spot being cultivated. In Stockholm, the capital of Sweden, you can stumble upon smaller or bigger containers, bought or DIY boxes and gardening plots basically everywhere: from private households, terraces, balconies, squares and parks to botanical gardens and side-ways. Some even have bees' hives to produce honey.



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**TIPS:** while designing your own garden, choose perennial plants for herbs and flowers. A perennial plant is a plant that lives more than two years. It dies every autumn and winter only to return next spring.

The local farmers and enthusiasts sell their products and offer seasonal vegetables' subscriptions via facebook groups and eco-food circles in many towns and regions in Sweden.



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# Youth Urban Gardening Concept

Strategic partnership project  
URBAN GARDEN 2.0  
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