

A Garden for Everybody

"A Garden for Everybody" is a project by **GB*9/17/18 - urban renewal office for the 9th, 17th and 18th district in Vienna**. In 2015 we analysed how an open community garden, that it is freely accessible and where beds are not related to specific persons, can work and what kind of essentials are required for it.

Urban gardening is a desire of many city residents these days. At the same time the possibility of obtaining a bed in a community garden is quite limited in Vienna. As in other cities a lot of community gardens emerged in Vienna's public spaces in the recent years. Usually they are organized by associations, whose members take care of their bed in the garden.

The approach of the so called "**open gardens**" is a bit different: The garden and all of its beds are cultivated by the whole community instead of assigning single patches to individuals, who take care of their own "private" bed. An open garden provides free access for every inhabitant of the neighbourhood: Everyone can use it and the public space remains completely open for the public. Projects that follow this approach can be found in Germany (Prinzessinnengärten/Berlin, Wurzelwerk/Oldenburg) as well as in other Austrian cities (Donaugarten/Linz, Gartenlabor2.0/Graz). This kind of concept is quite new for Vienna.

As there will be a specific possibility to start an open gardening project in the 9th district, we researched the framework conditions that are necessary for its successful implementation and sustainability. The chosen site is located in Nordbergstraße and is currently used as a parking lot but will be reorganized due to a big reconstruction project.

A community garden project can act as a connecting urban element, especially in a neighbourhood like the one around Nordbergstraße, which is currently in a state of changing. Gardening in public space can bring together people of different backgrounds and lifestyles and encourage their identification with the neighbourhood.

We researched best practice projects and visited open community gardens in Linz and Graz. At the same time we were working together with the 9th district's chairwoman on the practical implementation of an open garden in Nordbergstraße. Spatial conditions, legal requirements, organization and funding must be defined. A workshop with all the involved players was organized to discuss the potentials, difficulties and required steps to realize the project. How much support of the public authorities is needed? What amount of organizational work is required and within which timeframe? Who raises the basic funds? Who is in charge of a basic maintenance, do we need an educational draft?