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# Urban agriculture and its links to biodiversity – the case of community gardens in Germany

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## Abstract

One expression of the societal behavioral change regarding sustainability and responsibility for nature is the growing phenomenon of urban agriculture – especially community gardens – in the Global North. While the motivation to grow food in the urban setting may vary between the stakeholders, generally the provisions of fresh and healthy food as well as social and environmental considerations play a role. These aims should be reflected in the horticultural practices as well as in the gardens set up to enable such places to host a wide range of species, making them a valuable part of the green infrastructure of the cities and contributing to the gardeners knowledge on food, food chain transparency and food security. This could not only be a synergy between food production and urban biodiversity, but also preserve and propagate agro-biodiversity in terms of heritage species.

Still the management practices of community gardens have not been investigated systematically so far. Therefore the aim of this empirical study is to acquire an overview on the applied management practices and structure of community gardens in Germany and to relate it to their potential impact on biodiversity.

The survey was accomplished by conducting structured interviews in 38 community gardens in nine cities in Germany. The results reveal the large potential for urban biodiversity provided by garden run by urban agriculture initiatives, while the use of heritage species can be expanded. The results are valuable for sustainable city planning and highlight the need for further knowledge transfer and possible policy support.

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