



DO I NEED DESIGN SUPPORT FOR MY GARDEN?

Challenge

When it comes to growing food, an experienced allotment holder or professional urban farmer can help out a beginner. However, there are other, more complicated, issues to take into consideration. In such cases, designers can help solve problems by employing integrated solutions that can bring aesthetic quality and ecological value at the same time.

Why do gardeners need a designer?

Why do policy makers and stakeholders need a designer?

Having an urban allotment garden can be challenging depending on the location, the character, the scale and how many people intend to be involved in it. When the available allotment garden site is not in an already established area, the urban designer can support you in guiding you on useful design ideas, views, connections, taking advantage of the topography, making the best use of water, wind and sun, define edges and connect with public transport. A landscape architect or any professional gardener can help out with these issues.



Image 2 - Landscape Designer work for organic crop rotation in educational garden plots, Ljubljana Private Allotment Education Gardens, Slovenia. Photo: Dimitra Theochari



Image 3 - Anarchist design¹, Community Garden, Ljubljana, Slovenia. Photo: Dimitra Theochari

Message to Gardeners

- A designer can provide you with advice and solutions. Take as example Ljubljana Private Allotments, where a landscape architect not only designed the garden layout to include water conservation and crop rotation practices, but also contributed to the education of gardeners on how to grow food organically.
- Your garden is part of a larger system of urban green infrastructure in your area and contributes significantly to the biodiversity as well as the image of your city; thus a designer can work with you to make it as pretty, functional and ambitious as possible, and to become the pride of your neighbourhood.
- An experienced designer can help you make your garden cost less and produce more food. Have in mind that each garden has site specifics, so not every design solution you find on the internet fits the location and climate of your garden.

The urban designer is here to help with:

- Their experience; they have done this job many times and are able to understand the project and foresee challenges you might face in the future.
- The design advice does not need

to be expensive or complicated; overly designed spaces are not necessarily more successful.

Good advice can help create a very simple and functional garden that:

- Fits well into the location and its surrounding.
- Integrates solutions of rain water management, conservation and how to increase biodiversity.
- Provides functional and aesthetic edges, pathways, good access and connection to public transportation, etc.



Image 4 - Four Plots in a row with water collection tank rented by individual gardens for education on crop rotation in Ljubljana Private Allotments. Photo: Dimitra Theochari

Learn More

Useful links

<https://www.mcgill.ca/mchg/projects/ediblecampus>

<http://www.foodurbanism.org/bernex-confignon-parc-agro-urbain-competition-results-analysis/>

To find a variety of projects and scales please follow this link:

<http://www.foodurbanism.org/atlas/>

Case Study

Ljubljana Private Allotment Education Gardens:

Established by an entrepreneur landscape architect, these allotments are basically a female-owned-business based on the idea that people in the cities no longer know how to produce food, yet the interest to do so is growing. This growing interest from the residents of Ljubljana creates a clientele of organic-gardening-newbies that the business owner educates, supervises, and advocates throughout the year. Each gardener can rent four plots and learn crop rotation practices and basic principles of organic food production.

¹Anarchist design of the garden, that is, with no apparent concerns with structure or rules.



Image 5 - Personalised design of plots by gardeners, Thessaloniki Allotment Gardens, Greece. Photo: Dimitra Theochari



Image 6 - Designed allotment, Quinta da Granja, Lisbon, Portugal². Photo: Dimitra Theochari

Message to Policy Makers

Urban designers can act as consultants for policy makers and stakeholders who intend to promote allotments and other spaces for growing. The following are some of the aspects to take into consideration:

- Urban allotments play a very important role in providing ecosystem services to cities and urban inhabitants, increasing their resilience and adaptation capacity.
- Understanding the green infrastructure of the city, storm water management, access, and biodiversity connections is essential for policy makers to choose correct locations for the development of allotment gardens.
- Innovative, sustainable and resilient green infrastructure for food production strategies make cities more competitive and successful.
- Proximity to schools, residential communities, bicycle and sport



Image 7 - Planted Plots in Thessaloniki Kipos3 garden, Greece. Photo: Dimitra Theochari

trails, local food restaurants and farmers' markets and public transport are only some of the urban layers that urban designers are capable of putting together to provide you with suitable solutions.

- Integrated solutions offered by designers often seek to incorporate aspects such as accessibility, safety, image and identity.
- Spatial guidelines regarding location, character, scale of allotments, but also views, connections, taking advantage of the slope, making the best use of water, wind and sun, defining edges and connecting with public transportation can be identified and developed by an urban designer in a set of performance-based codes, avoiding outdated form-based codes.
- Establishing a set of policies can guarantee and increase success stories.



Image 8 - Tool House in Thessaloniki Kipos3 garden, Greece. Photo: Dimitra Theochari

Learn More

Useful links

http://www.ryerson.ca/carrotcity/board_pages/community/evergreen_brickworks.html

<http://www.kobenhavnergron.dk/place/ostergro/>

Case Study

Kipos3 and Urban Vineyard of Thessaloniki:

An interesting example on how to bring together designers and universities with the municipality and initiative of the locals are the two adjacent projects of Kipos3 and Urban Vineyard in Thessaloniki. While the idea of the Urban Vineyard came from the mayor and it is established and developed by the local university, Kipos3 is an initiative that started from the Architecture School of Thessaloniki and achieved great success so far by getting space from the municipality to implement it and attracting the neighbours to take part and work on the garden. Both projects are quite recent but so far they seem to be successful.

²For more information regarding the Quinta da Granja allotment park, take a look at Factsheet 02, where you can also find further suggestions regarding allotment design.

AUTHORS

Dimitra Theochari, National Technical University of Athens, Greece

dimitra.theochari@gmail.com

Reviewed by: Ina Šuklje - Erjavec, Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia

INFO SERIES | ISSUE 1 V. ENGLISH | DATE OF ONLINE PUBLICATION: 20 JULY 2016

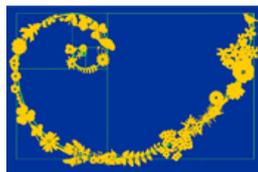


COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) is a pan-European intergovernmental framework. Its mission is to enable break-through scientific and technological developments leading to new concepts and products and thereby contribute to strengthening Europe's research and innovation capacities.

www.cost.eu



COST is supported by the EU Framework Programme Horizon 2020



Acknowledgement

This factsheet is based upon work from COST Action TU1201 Urban Allotment Gardens in European Cities, supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology)

www.urbanallotments.eu



Join urban gardens in Europe

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/825421310826607/>