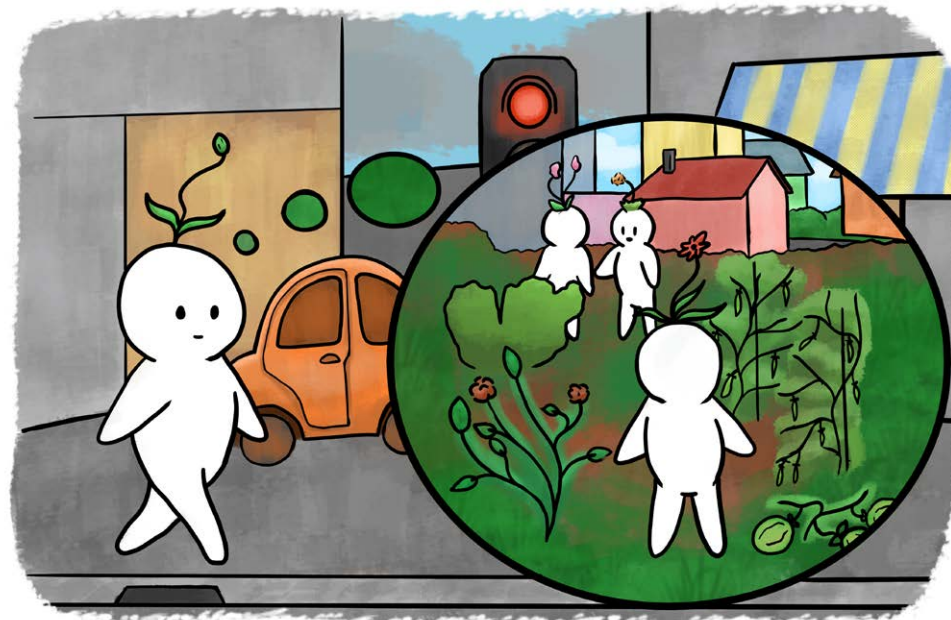


# #1

## The nature in the garden is an escape from everyday life

Being in the fresh air, experiencing the beauty of nature, and escaping from everyday life – these are the main reasons for spending time in the garden. Social interactions also play a role: relationships among family and friends are actively cultivated in the garden.

In Switzerland, gardening is primarily a leisure activity. Relieving the family budget or producing fresh food is secondary. Gardens are popular because they allow many different activities in an environment that is perceived as natural. The main motivations differ from person to person and can also change over time. Social contacts, in particular, can become more important as people get older.



### Recommendations for ...

#### Hobby gardeners

Promote more nature in the neighbourhood. Even sealed residual areas and courtyards can be transformed into small garden paradises.

If garden space is scarce in your neighbourhood, you could also make selected areas of your garden accessible to others. It helps if you divide the garden into different areas with plants (e.g. shrubs) instead of fencing it off completely. If the work in the vegetable garden is too much for you, you can also cultivate it collectively.

#### Family garden associations

Pay attention to social inequalities. The demand for gardens has grown strongly among well-off families. As a result, older and/or less educated tenants are increasingly outnumbered and feel less welcome. Expensive garden sheds built by previous tenants can discourage the less wealthy from taking over a plot of land.

#### Public administrations

Create the conditions for a diverse range of gardens for all.

Pay attention to social inequalities: especially for older people and/or people with lower budgets. Green spaces, such as gardens, are particularly important because people can spend time there with no obligation to consume and can even harvest affordable and healthy food.

Create incentives for unsealing land and enabling interim uses.

#### Private administrations and cooperatives

Enable the creation of own “garden niches” on existing semi-public green spaces. This increases the quality of the green spaces for the tenants and promotes social interaction.



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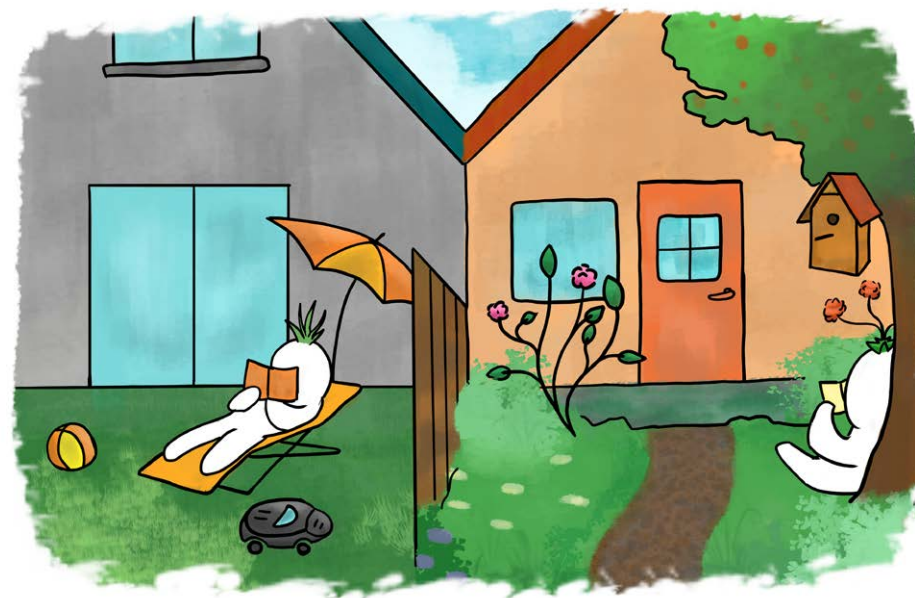
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## #2

### Hobby gardeners value biodiversity

Most hobby gardeners strongly agree with the idea of promoting biodiversity in their gardens. About half of the people surveyed do not use pesticides at all, and one in five uses them no more than once a year. Many hobby gardeners also specifically promote species with nesting aids and small structures such as branch piles. But gardens should also be easy to manage and aesthetically pleasing. Personal attitudes have a great influence on the way gardens are managed. Many people identify with their own garden and/or believe that one has an ecological responsibility as a hobby gardener. However, the sense of order and beauty, child-friendliness, effort, and costs are also important. Lack of time or money can be limiting. One's own experiences, regulations, and the social environment also play a role. Many hobby gardeners say they study neighbouring gardens or discuss practices with neighbours, family, or friends. Nevertheless, only a few feel obliged to adhere to a certain management style because of the neighbourhood. Regulations, i.e. measures that specifically promote certain gardening practices, are often poorly accepted.



#### Recommendations for ...

##### Hobby gardeners

To convince other gardeners in your neighbourhood of an ecological gardening practice, it can already help to exchange information about your own practices. In other words: “Do good things and tell people about it”.

Share your success with your neighbours. This can strengthen identification with organic gardening and reduce resistance from neighbours.

Share your knowledge about ecological processes with your neighbours. For example, wild plants that are valuable for wild bees and also have a high ornamental value are often mistaken for weeds and pulled out.

##### Family garden associations

To promote organic gardening practices, base your strategies on incentives and voluntarism rather than prohibitive regulations.

Offer advice and mediation on time and money saving methods to promote biodiversity.

##### Public administrations

To promote organic gardening practices, base your strategies on incentives and voluntarism rather than prohibitive regulations.

Take advantage of the existing interest in ecological management methods, e.g. by including gardens in nature and species conservation strategies and inviting gardeners to think and participate in measures to promote biodiversity in urban areas.

Offer advice and mediation on time- and money-saving methods to promote biodiversity.

##### Private administrations and cooperatives

To promote organic gardening practices, rely on incentives and voluntarism rather than prohibitions.

Use the interest in gardening and ecological management methods to involve the tenants in the maintenance and design of the green spaces.



# # 3

## Gardens are restorative, biodiverse gardens are more restorative

Amateur gardeners report that they use their gardens for recreation. People who are intensively involved with their own garden benefit more than those who primarily strive for a low-maintenance garden. In fact, the recreational value of a garden increases with the biodiversity of the plants that grow in it. For a significant proportion of garden owners and tenants, however, the garden is often a cause of stress. The garden is good for you - especially after a hard day at work or at home. Gardens in the city are therefore important recreational spaces because they are often very different from the everyday surroundings of their owners and tenants. In the garden, people leave their daily routine behind, dig in the soil with their fingers, let their gaze wander, and pursue their own interests. You can easily observe many exciting natural phenomena. But gardens need care and can rarely be designed freely. Lack of time, norms, regulations and, last but not least, one's own ideas and expectations can be a burden.



### Recommendations for ...

#### Hobby gardeners

Use the recreational potential of your garden by actively designing and maintaining it.

Garden in a more relaxed way by breaking away from preconceived garden images.

Go for diverse and natural gardens. These may require a little patience to create, but they are easy to maintain.

Do you feel like gardening but don't have your own garden? Try it out first by helping out with friends, neighbours, or in a community garden. If you like it, it is worth leasing a piece of land, e.g. from a family garden association.

#### Family garden associations

The needs and possibilities of the tenants change. Take this into account when drafting the garden rules and designing the areas.

Pay attention to social inequalities: especially for older people and/or people with smaller budgets. Green spaces, such as gardens, are particularly important because people can spend time there with no obligation to consume and can even harvest affordable and healthy food.

#### Public administrations

Use gardens as a tool to promote public health.

Facilitate access to gardens, especially for people with low income, thereby counteracting income-related differences in health.

The needs and possibilities of tenants change. Take this into account when designing the areas and drafting rules and regulations.

#### Private administrations and cooperatives

Allow the creation of private "garden niches" on existing green spaces. This increases the quality of the green spaces for the tenants and promotes social interaction.



# # 4

## Garden soils are fertile and healthy

The quality of garden soils is often better than that of agricultural soils. Soils of gardens harbour a very large diversity of living organisms, are rich in humus, and usually have a crumbly structure. Vegetable and flower beds are particularly rich in earthworms, while soils under frequently mown lawns are of poorer quality. However, nutrient levels must be kept in mind: Phosphorus and potassium are often present in excess.

Soils in settlements are subject to numerous human influences and are often altered in their structure. Thanks to good care by amateur gardeners, such soils can recover. Garden soils usually have a good soil structure because they are often worked gently and by hand. They are rich in humus because they are supplied with manure and compost. However, the excessive use of fertilisers, especially mineral fertilisers that are difficult to dose, and waste recycling through compost, lead to the accumulation of large amounts of phosphorus and potassium in many gardens.



### Recommendations for ...

#### Hobby gardeners

Fertilise with moderation! Excess nutrients hinder the uptake of micronutrients by plants. Produce your own compost for fertilisation instead of buying mineral fertilisers.

Plant legumes such as clover, beans, or peas. These supply the soil with nitrogen while not increasing phosphorus and potassium levels. Thanks to a symbiosis with nodule bacteria, legumes fix nitrogen from the air.

Use slow-release fertilisers and organic nitrogen fertilisers such as horn shavings or feather meal, which work over a longer period of time because they must first be microbially converted.

Manage your garden in a soil-friendly way by a) covering the soil with plants or mulch, b) digging the soil as rarely and as gently as possible and only when the soil is dry enough to prevent silting, c) mowing the lawn or meadow less frequently and higher above ground, and d) refraining from using pesticides.

#### Family garden associations

Emphasise to the tenants the problem of nutrient surpluses and the associated loss of soil fertility.

Demonstrate strategies for providing nitrogen to plants without increasing phosphorus and potassium levels.

Consistently implement bans on mineral fertilisers and pesticides and offer advice on alternatives.

#### Public administrations

Demonstrate strategies for conserving soils and their fertility without incurring large maintenance costs.

Consistently implement bans on mineral fertilisers and pesticides in family garden areas.

#### Private administrations and cooperatives

Mow lawns and meadows less frequently and not too short.

Refrain from using mineral fertilisers and pesticides.



# #5

## Biodiversity creates soil quality

In a diverse and carefully tended garden, it's not only birds, hedgehogs and insects that like to stay, but the living organisms of the soil stay as well. With more different plants growing in the garden, and more foliage and dead plants that are allowed to remain, there will be more living organisms in the soil and the nutrient cycle functions improve: plant residues are better decomposed, nutrients are mobilised more quickly, and more water is stored.

Soils are habitats. A richly planted garden promotes the diversity of soil organisms. Under a species-rich plant cover there are more different niches and food resources, such as root excretions and plant residues, than under a monoculture. This diversity of roots and residues in the soil promotes the diversity and activity of living organisms: The result is an ecosystem that sustains itself and a soil that fulfils its functions.



### Recommendations for ...

#### Hobby gardeners

Create diverse gardens by combining different plants in your vegetable and flower beds (mixed culture). Tips on which plants are best combined can be found in any gardening book.

Do not polish your garden! Soils should always be covered, preferably by plants and their residues. Let leaves and dead wood rot, especially under trees and shrubs. This gradually builds up a revitalised top layer of soil that nourishes plants and stores water.

Produce your own compost and fertilise the vegetable and flower beds with it. Mineral fertilisers damage the living organisms in the soil. Therefore, be careful with the dosage or do not use fertilisers at all.

Rely on manual labour instead of machines. Mowing and raking by hand leaves much more plant residues than the very efficient leaf blowers and lawn mowers and produces neither noise nor exhaust fumes.

#### Family garden associations

Help spread the knowledge about proven intercropping methods and try out new ones.

Encourage tenants to close nutrient cycles on their plots, e.g. by composting plant residues in the garden.

#### Public administrations

Create incentives for closing nutrient cycles on private land, e.g. with a shredding service.

Consistently implement bans on mineral fertilisers and pesticides in family garden areas.

#### Private administrations and cooperatives

Create diverse green spaces with many different plant species.

Close nutrient cycles on green spaces by allowing less leaves and other organic material to be removed from the greenspace.

Refrain from cleaning up green spaces too thoroughly in autumn, e.g. by relying more on manual labour instead of machines. Raking and mowing by hand leaves much more organic residues than the very efficient leaf blowers and mowers and produces neither noise nor exhaust fumes.



# # 6

## Gardens are species-rich habitats

Gardens provide habitats for many different species of animals and plants. In an average urban garden, around 170 different animal species, not even counting vertebrates such as birds, can be observed in the course of a summer. Most of them are insects. In addition, there are about 120 plant species. The more careful the gardening and the more different plants grow in a garden, the more animal species occur. A garden can accommodate more plant species if it offers more different habitats. Gardens are a mosaic of different habitats. They are neither forest, meadow, wetland, water body, shrubbery nor field, and yet they have characteristics of all these habitats. This habitat mosaic can accommodate many different plant species, and thus provides food and shelter for many different animal species. Plants adapted to the local environmental conditions require less maintenance, which benefits animal diversity.



### Recommendations for ...

#### Hobby gardeners

Design your garden in a varied way and plant it mainly with native plants from your region that are adapted to local conditions.

Mow lawns and meadows less frequently and only in sections so that animals can continue to find shelter and food in the tall grass. Leave fringes of old grass and dry plant stems at the edges for several years.

Let plant residues and wood rot in the garden, e.g. as mulch, on piles of branches, and as standing or lying dead wood.

Plant many different and preferably native flowers that are rich in nectar and pollen to feed wild bees and other flower-visiting insects.

Refrain from using pesticides and intensive cleaning, e.g. with leaf blowers.

#### Family garden associations

Tolerate gardens that are maintained less intensively but in a wildlife-friendly way. These may look a bit messy, especially in winter, but favour beneficial insects and other animals.

Help spread the knowledge about proven intercropping methods and try out new ones.

Consistently implement bans on pesticides.

#### Public administrations

Preserve gardens and garden areas in the urban area.

Create incentives and advisory services for the creation of near-natural gardens.

Consistently implement bans on pesticides.

Include gardens and private green space areas in urban conservation strategies. Rare and endangered insect species can also be found in gardens, such as wild bees and deadwood-inhabiting beetles.

#### Private administrations and cooperatives

Create diverse green spaces with native plants from the region that are adapted to local conditions.

Maintain green spaces in a more wildlife-friendly way by mowing less frequently and only in sections; leaving herbaceous borders, dry plant stems, and clumps of old grass. Let leaves and dead wood rot on the site and avoid pesticides and leaf blowers.



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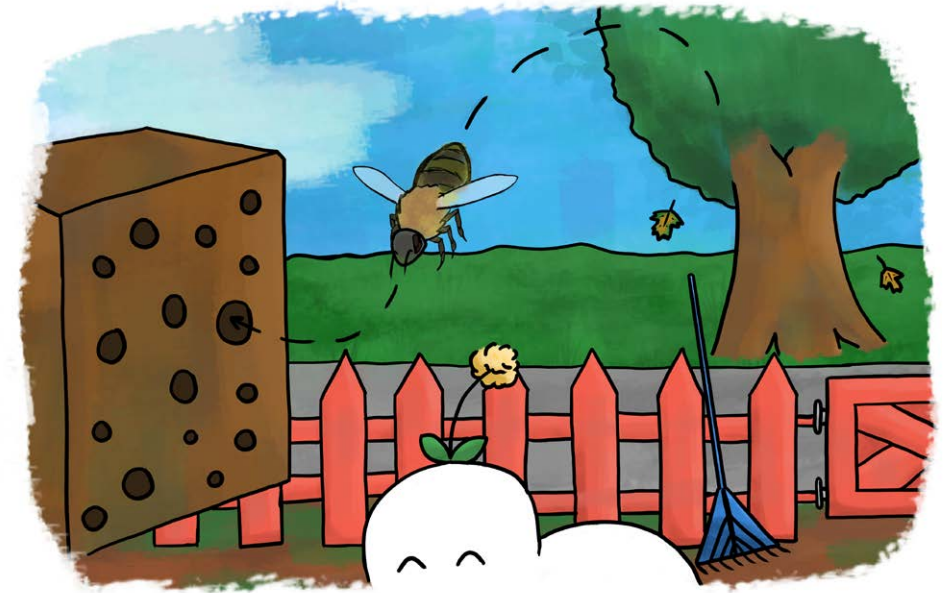
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# # 7

## No garden is an island

The environment surrounding a garden has a great influence on the occurrence of animals in the garden. In general, activity and diversity of species decrease with increasing urban density. For example, flowers in gardens located in the city centre are visited by only half as many wild bees and other insects as flowers on the outskirts of the city. Planting woody plants or flowers rich in nectar and pollen significantly increases the activity of animals even in the densely built-up city centre– in some cases even more than in comparable gardens on the outskirts!

Many species need more habitat than a single garden can provide. A garden plot can rarely cover all of the needs of a species for food, nesting sites, and hiding places. This is why many species lose their habitat with increasing urban density. This has a negative effect on their activity in gardens. However, it also highlights the importance of individual gardens for animals, especially in dense urban areas.



### Recommendations for ...

#### Hobby gardeners

Make your garden more permeable by installing horizontal fences or using woody plants to structure your garden instead of installing vertical picket fences or wire mesh. Remove obstacles or create openings for animals to slip through.

Create a habitat network in your neighbourhood by connecting your garden to surrounding gardens. Jointly plant wild hedges, trees, and flower meadows that lie on property boundaries or even extend across several gardens.

#### Family garden associations

Make the areas more permeable by installing horizontal fences or using woody plants to structure the space instead of installing vertical picket fences or wire mesh. Remove obstacles or create openings for animals to slip through.

#### Public administrations

Include gardens, garden areas, and urban neighbourhoods in the planning of conservation projects.

Create advisory services and incentives to connect gardens at the level of urban neighbourhoods, e.g. to remove obstacles, plant large trees, or preserve existing old trees.

#### Private administrations and cooperatives

Make green spaces more permeable by installing horizontal fences or using woody plants to structure the space instead of installing vertical picket fences or wire mesh. Remove obstacles or create openings for animals to slip through.

Establish large-scale flower meadows and plant large trees and wild hedges.



# # 8

## Every garden offers a unique habitat

The composition of species differs from garden to garden: Only a few species occur in every garden. For example, beetles that are better adapted to dry conditions are more commonly found in family gardens than in home gardens. In addition, many of the species that occur in the city are quite rare and only occur in specific areas. Therefore, quite a lot of plant and animal species can be found in urban gardens: around 1,100 animal and over 1,000 plant species could be observed during one summer! Gardens differ in their design and maintenance and, accordingly, in the species that can be found in them. For example, family gardens are on average much sunnier and drier than home gardens because large trees are prohibited and watering is restricted. Gardening practices also differ between individuals. Differences between gardens and hobby gardeners therefore have a positive effect on urban biodiversity!



### Recommendations for ...

#### Hobby gardeners

You cannot please all species! Especially in small gardens, it is hardly possible to promote all species with the same effect.

You can probably most effectively promote those species that are already present in your garden or in the immediate vicinity. Observe for yourself or seek advice on which species are present and how to improve their habitat.

#### Family garden associations

Actively promote species that are typically found in family garden areas, e.g. beneficial insects such as ground beetles or wild bees.

Get advice on which species are present in the area or on the site and how to improve their habitat.

#### Public administrations

Due to the different functions of gardens and individual differences between hobby gardeners, gardens differ in their design and maintenance and accordingly, also in the composition of the species inside. A diverse range of gardens therefore not only benefits people, but also urban biodiversity.

Assume that most species found in gardens are quite rare in the city, and therefore even small gardens contribute to biodiversity conservation.

#### Private administrations and cooperatives

Actively promote species that occur in your green spaces or in the immediate vicinity.

Seek advice at the planning stage of building developments on which species are present in the area and how to improve their habitat.

