

Urban agriculture and gardening to connect with nature

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Multiple benefits of connectedness with nature, engaging and volunteering in urban nature sites such as urban farms or allotment gardens have been linked previously to physical, social and psychological health and well-being.

Urban gardens and farms are places to connect with nature both for adults and children; they are used as supporting environments for facilitating contact with nature in the city, green care, outdoor schooling and nature education. Gardens contribute to city greening, land based community growing, development of provisioning and cultural ecosystem services, promotion of intangible heritage, biocultural diversity and local knowledge. Gardens and farms are places for plant foraging, growing local and biodiverse food, learning and practicing garden therapy, mental relaxation, attention restoration, physical activity and social integration. Various city gardens are spaces to which individuals get attached and engaged into activities with local communities, contributing to sustainable development of community facilities and ecological transition processes.

In this presentation we will discuss through real examples how urban farms, allotment and other community managed plant cultivation spaces contribute to connectedness with nature, place attachment, promotion of physical, mental and social health and local knowledge in the cities. We will also look what role urban agriculture and city gardening play in addressing health inequalities, social-economic issues and nature based integration solutions for immigrant communities and refugees.