

Community Garden Kick-Off Meeting August 16, 2023

The "Community Garden Kickoff workshop" at Erlenmattplatz, was attended by 15 interested individuals to discuss the potential opportunities for involvement in a community garden.

To inspire the workshop participants, Tilla Künzli provided a presentation with examples of projects involving urban greening in public spaces.

Presentation Highlights

At the beginning, participants were encouraged to look through the "green lens" and envision the future. Some visions shared were:

- Social gatherings and gardening
- Bees
- Biodiversity
- Colorful displays
- Abundance of flowers

Tilla showcased various examples of community gardens from the Urban Agriculture Network, such as Landhof Community Garden and the former (P)Erlengarten.

Tips for Garden Establishment

- Acquire building materials from salvage yards or other sustainable projects.
- Implement rainwater drainage and water tanks.
- Avoid using black surfaces, as they absorb sunlight and generate additional heat.
- Start small and let the garden grow naturally.

Following this, moderated group discussions were held at tables to address four selected thematic questions. Participant responses were as follows:

1. *What should be cultivated?*

- Various fruit varieties like apples, pears, figs, cherries, melons, and berries, as well as other wild fruits integrated into the area's design.
- Herbs and vegetables for cooking.
- Greenery should provide shade.
- Year-round harvesting is desired (winter vegetables).
- Flower meadows are also planned.
- Space for animals like chickens and bees is intended.

2. *How should the beds be designed?*

- Piling soil on gravel to make the most of the ground.
- Utilizing container roofs.
- Incorporating many bathtubs.
- Raised beds.
- Design to create shaded areas.
- Herb spirals.
- Vertical planting (pergola).

3. *What will happen with the harvest?*

- Garden group members will have first access to the harvest.
- Cooking events with other institutions will be organized.
- Erlenmarkt involvement.
- Exchange activities or a food-sharing cabinet.
- Workshops on preserving the harvest will be offered.
- Consider producing items from the cultivation.
- Installing a Selecta-style vending machine for products.

4. *How should communication be organized?*

- Task overview board.
- Excel sheet for input or online tools.
- A daycare center could offer a fixed day of supervision.
- Involvement of other institutions.
- Monitor and record all tasks.
- Distribute responsibilities based on competencies.
- More effort allows more harvesting.
- Clear structure and role plan.
- Regular meetings, once a week, transitioning to once a month in the future.
- Security personnel from the area to also keep an eye on the garden during patrols due to vandalism.

Next Steps

A next meeting will be held on **October 18**, where the budget plan will be presented and concrete milestones for garden establishment will be set. The formation of the garden group and the required time commitment will also be decided in this meeting. Interested individuals can contact the Verein Erle Perle in the meantime to express their interest in active participation in the community garden.

The goal is to start garden planning by the end of October, with greening activities commencing in 2024.