

Abstract

The Stadtacker Wagenhallen e.V. in Stuttgart north is a former waste land, which was turned into a community garden. On an area of approximately 4000m² people can garden on private patches, in self-made green houses or collaborative on community areas.

Since 2012 the area is used by gardeners and was in the same time colonized by a ruderal flora like wild carrots (*Daucus carota*), common sow-thistle (*Sonchus oleraceus*) and goldenrod (*Solidago canadensis*), which is a typical plant community on wastelands. It is known that wastelands in cities are important places for biodiversity. In most cities these places are not accessible for the public. That is why the Stadtacker can be seen as a project with a model character. Due to the possibility for the city dwellers to plant vegetables and flowers between wild growing plants the natural succession and plant community gets altered. Further allows the organization of the community garden patches to lie fallow and thus, a changing mosaic of cleared over cultivated to feral patches arises.

With this thesis an interdisciplinary approach was made. The aim was to see if the motivations of the gardeners can be seen on the plant composition on the patches, how they perceive wild growing plants (WGP) and if processes can be seen that influence the biodiversity of the area. Therefore, a relevé was done, which were used to categorize the plants into wild growing plants and planted crops. Subsequently they were depicted with pie charts and classified according to the ratio between both categories. Eleven gardeners were interviewed in order to differentiate their motivations and compare them with the relevé. Due to the interdisciplinarity the methods were reduced to fulfill the volume of a Master's thesis.

Findings are that the majority of the patches are a mixture of WGP and planted crops with a more or less equal distribution between both. The interviews show that the contact to nature is an important motivation for the gardeners. Whereas the harvest varies in priority and can even only be limited on wild growing weeds and herbs. A theory of re-grounding can be supported where city dwellers seek for a new relation to nature. The wild growth is perceived as educating by most of the interviewed gardeners. WGP are used for food, beverage and for medicinal uses like borage (*Borago officinalis*), peppermint (*Mentha spec.*), dandelion (*Taraxacum* sect. *Ruderalia*) and ribwort (*Plantago lanceolata*).