

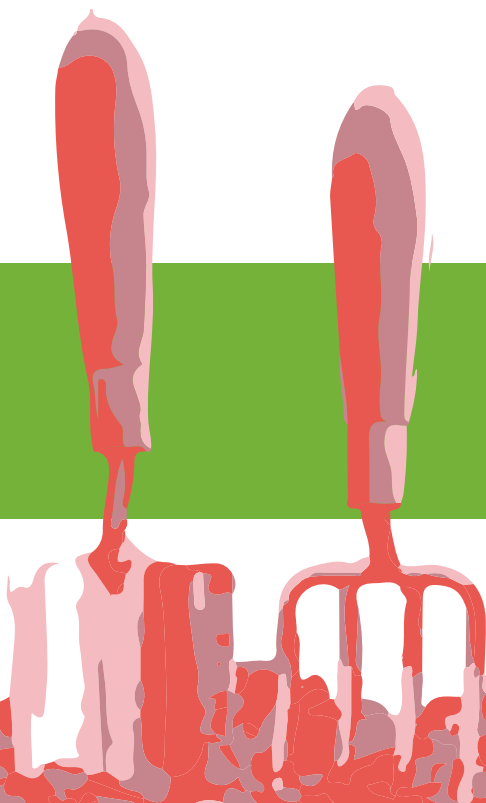


UGAIN

Urban **G**Ardens for the social
INtegration of migrants

Activity:

Open garden day





Regular open garden day with changing activities like community cooking, spiritual activities or activities for the garden.



"We have decided to rename the activity from Activity Day to Open Garden Day. They have to decide if they want to get something going in the garden or if they want to bring as many people as possible together during the day. It is important that there are people in charge during the day. For example, when new visitors or interested people come - the person in charge becomes responsible over the course of time."

Board member

Activity file

1. Name of the activity

Open garden day

2. Type of activity

Social activity

3. Description of the activity

Beside spontaneous and individual festivals organised in the garden during the year, a monthly regular action day was introduced. Originally called "activity day", it is now known as monthly "day of open garden." Every first Saturday of the month (mainly from March to November) everyone who is interested can come, get a tour and have a look at the activities of the garden.

In most cases, this day is connected with special, changing activities. Examples of these activities are: joint cooking, social events/festivals, spiritual offers, church masses and children's activities (e.g., birthday celebrations). This day is oftentimes connected with required garden tasks such as the building of a growing bed or the construction of a shelter or other facilities, where every guest or garden user is invited to help. Depending on the season, weather or activity there are about 10-40 visitors during the different times of the day. For each monthly event, at least one garden board member is responsible for the organisation and the running of the event. A premise for the selection of a topic for the event is that there is a multicultural aspect of the day. People of all origins or beliefs should be encouraged to attend in order to get to know each other. The refugees who live in the garden are involved and help with the preparations if possible. There is no absolute need for a special activity for that day. If no topic was found, the garden will still be open to visitors and the community.

4. Competences and training needed

By the launch of this regular event a few years ago, the responsible head of the board was the "driving force" to initiate the day and introduce the individual topics. Meanwhile, all board members are involved in the proposal and decision processes for the activity and the changing topics of the open garden day. The board member(s) who proposed a topic or activity is/are the responsible person(s) for the specific day. However, they are supported by other members in organising the day. Thus, certain competencies in coordination, procurement of materials and communication are needed for the initiator and the supporters for the activity. For technically challenging tasks such as working in the permaculture beds, cultural cooking events or joint harvesting/gardening activities, specific competencies in these fields are needed and often managed with additional outside help (experts, seminar leaders).

5. Steps for the implementation of the activity

- Suggestions for the open garden day are made in the board meeting depending on individual ideas or concrete working tasks. Special requirements may be, for example, that the flower beds must be prepared in spring, that soil work must be carried out in the permaculture garden, or that new migrants must be welcomed and received.
- The Board then determines the activity of the day and the responsible persons. Staffing and materials are planned and procured by the initiator who is also looking for external experts (when needed). For activity themes with a multicultural theme (e.g., cooking, ceremonies, song festivals) use migrants from the district who are already involved in the planning phase. They contribute using their skills experience and knowledge from their origin (e.g. use of cooking ingredients, folk songs)
- Various information channels from the church and garden network are used to announce the event and disseminate it using the snowball technique. Garden users are invited to help or add ideas (e.g. add certain meals for the cooking event). The local community is invited via the "church letter" and interested stakeholders or groups can also be invited (e.g. horticulture clubs for activities in the permaculture)

- Organise the day:
 - Be sure that at least the responsible person is on site and coordinates the day
 - Try to involve as many people as possible in the pre-running of the event and the execution of the day in advance.
 - Organise the tasks as simply as possible, so that all participants in the event have the opportunity to participate or help out, regardless of their origin, physical limitations or age.

6. Materials and methods

- **Infrastructure:** There is no upper limit for the number of participants in the activities. The size of the infrastructure depends on the type of activity that was chosen as topic for each of the activities. In most cases, the huge size of the garden is more than sufficient.
- **Materials and human resources:** Depending on the type of activity, the effort for the organisation and preparation of the activity can vary.
- **Time/Workload:** Depending on the type of activity, the workload and preparation of the activity can vary. For example, in the case of undertaking large-scale ground work in the permaculture garden or the construction of new areas, many helpers and specific material logistics are required. For other topics, such as cooking together, every visitor or participant can decide for themselves how much they want to help. Activities lead by external experts reduces the effort in the run-up to the day.
- **Costs:** Depending on the type of activity, costs for activity can vary. In most cases, costs for required materials is the only expenses item (e.g. garden tools, additional cooking ingredients etc.).

7. Learning outcomes for the participants

The responsible person becomes an “expert for one day”. They learn that their concerns or initiative is appreciated by visitors or garden users. The integration of migrants and refugees in the garden is also often a very valuable experience due to language barriers. Due to the varying themes and activities, all participants constantly obtain new skills. (e.g. cooking, gardening). In addition to gaining specialist knowledge (e.g., how to grow vegetables, building measures, foreign cuisine), migrants learn how to deal openly with other people, Christian values, and the benefit from the inner calm of spiritual gatherings.

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