Community gardening in Wallonia and Brussels: proposals for research and actions

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INTRODUCTION

• In 2009-2011, a map of Brussel's community gardens was created.
• Inventory, protect and defend Brussels' gardens
• Created together with « Le début des Haricots ASBL »: Kari Stevenne and Gael Loicq (trainee) and « Réseau des Jardins Solidaires (Jérome Rassart)
• Continued in Wallonia by « Le réseau des Consommateurs Responsables ASBL » (2011-2013)
• Citizen-based
• Out of academic context
METHODOLOGY

1) Using satellite imagery: find and draw gardens areas
METHODOLOGY
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2) Contact Brussel's communes, non-profit organisations, train public transport company (SNCB/NMBS), ...

3) Field surveys

4) Local & people knowledge...
1. BRUSSELS' WEBMAP OF GARDENS
(www.nobohan.be/webmaps/potagers/map.html)

Made using OpenLayers + GeoExt (Open-source geospatial librairies)
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Some facts about Brussels' gardens:

- About 110 community gardens were mapped in Brussels-Capital region
- 566,660 m² ≈ 56 ha (0,35 % Brussels region area)
- « New » community gardens receive a large part of the attention in media, although that they cover the smallest part of the total garden area
- « Old » gardeners sometimes fear to be took over by « new » gardeners (e.g., Carré Tillens in Uccle)
- There are many kinds of community gardens:
1. BRUSSELS' WEBMAP OF GARDENS

Other initiatives in Brussels:

- www.potagersurbains.be, 54 gardens referenced, by Bruxelles-Environnement & Le début des Haricots, up-to-date.

- www.potage-toit.be, by Le début des Haricots

- www.pretersonjardin.be

- ...
2. WALLONIA WEBMAP OF GARDENS
(www.asblrcr.be)
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- About 205 community gardens were mapped in Wallonia
- Only institutional (not-profit organisations, CPAS, school, etc.) gardens were mapped
- But there is still a lot unmapped!

- Could be linked with local initiatives (e.g., Réseau Pot'col des potagers collectifs en province de Liège --> http://reseaurpotcol.jimdo.com)
Community gardens in Belgium: Where are we?

- Strong societal demand for community gardening in Belgium & it is a hot topic that is often covered by media
- Part of a global movement (New York, Toronto, London, ...)
- Linked to urban agriculture issues (e.g., VERDIR in Liège)
- « New » and « old » gardeners issue: How to transfer the knowledge?
Community gardens in Belgium: Where are we?

Need for an interdisciplinary research:
- Update and feed the **mapping** of gardens
- About **soil quality/pollution** in the gardens
- About **land potential/management** in urban areas but also in rural areas
- About **knowledge and technology dissemination** for gardeners
- About plant **breeds and seeds** that are used in gardens
- About plant **protection/pest control** in a gardening context
- About **agrometeorology & decision-making tools** for gardeners
- ...

This is not only about Sunday morning gardening, it could be a piece of our future food security!
Thanks!

- People @ Le Début des Haricots ASBL
- Jérome Rassart @ Réseau des Jardins-Solidaires
- People @ Réseau des Consommateurs Responsables (RCR) ASBL
- And to the gardeners...
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