

# Soil Alliance News

Newsletter of the European Land and Soil Alliance (ELSA),



Edition 2 / 2017

Dear members and friends of the European Land and Soil Alliance,

**'Healthy Soils in the City'** is the TOP theme of this issue of 'Soil Alliance News'. Soils in (big) cities also fulfil many functions. In cities, soils are most commonly found in parks, gardens and green spaces. However, here they are not only the foundation for leisure activities and recreation, but also a basis of life for animals and plants. Together with the plants, they also ensure a balanced urban climate - both in summer and in winter. They are the green lungs of the cities. But pollution concentrations and a wide range of utilisation demands can be particularly hard on soils in highly condensed spaces. It is therefore all the more important to treat the few, non-sealed surfaces carefully. Since the nineties, (kitchen) gardens have been increasingly conquering municipalities and cities. Urban gardening initiatives are bringing vegetable cultivation back into the inner city. The same applies here: Healthy, humus-rich and low-pollutant soils are required for the production of healthy food. Urban gardeners need to be aware that not every soil is suitable for the cultivation of crops! Cities and municipalities are encouraged to provide relevant information and to support them with advice.

'Healthy soils in the city' are a very ambitious and difficult to reach goal. But a variety of activities show that we are at least in part on the right track to continue to 'gain ground'!

The Board

Soil Alliance News is published regularly. We appreciate your suggestions and criticism. In addition, you have the opportunity to disseminate news, projects, events, etc. Just send us a short [email](#).

## Top theme: Healthy Soils in the city

**ELSA Annual Declaration 'Urban Gardening - Healthy Soils in Cities and Municipalities'**: Urban gardens enrich municipalities and cities on many levels. At the same time, food production on urban soil poses special challenges for gardeners, such as potential soil pollution and conflicts of interest in the use of scarcely available open spaces in the city. In its annual declarations, the board of the Land and Soil Alliance calls for a 'right to garden' and encourages municipalities to actively deal with the special needs of urban gardening.

[Additional information](#)

**Houses for people:** The detached single-family home with garden is still the dream of many people. In his film 'Houses for People', the Austrian city planner Reinhard Seiß shows that there are alternatives which offer both comprehensive residential satisfaction as well as high sustainability of the housing and land development and economical treatment of soils.

[Additional information](#)

**'Healthy Soil Interest Group' established:** The interest group was founded in Regensburg (Germany) with the intent to build healthy, humus-rich soils that produce high-quality plants and healthy food as a foundation for the health of humans and animals.

[Additional information](#)

**'City Greenery' white paper:** Urban greenery is a distinguishing element of our cities. The 'City Greenery' white paper was presented on 08 May 2017 at the 2nd Federal Congress - 'Greenery in the City - for a Liveable Future' - in Essen (Germany), this year's 'Green Capital of Europe'. It defines central areas of action and measures for securing and qualifying green and open spaces in the cities. This involves better legal integration of the urban green infrastructure, more targeted support measures, the development of guides, implementation of model and research projects, as well as improved communication between the activists.

[Additional information](#)

**The 'Living City' foundation** wants to preserve and shape the urban diversity of work, culture and living. Key focus is on the areas of light, greenery, design of public spaces and inclusive district developments. Volume 9 'Green Laboratories - Experiments on the City Park of Tomorrow' was recently published in the publication series. The book is also available as a PDF document.

[Additional information](#)

**Green Urban Labs:** In the project of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (German abbreviation: BMUB), model projects are being developed that test new approaches to urban greenery development. This is supposed to aid in linking topics of environmental justice, multi-coding and urban greenery infrastructure with associated topics such as integration, health, education, or climate.

[Additional information](#)

## Additional Reports

**The Earthworm Manifesto:** Earthworms are indispensable for good soils, but their lives are currently being compromised too much. This is the warning by the World Wild Fund for Nature (WWF). In its Earthworm Manifesto, it explains what the risks of worm population decline are, why small animals are so important, and what we can do to prevent their death.

[Additional information](#)

**Photo competition 'Soil – a treasure of nature':** The Thuringian State Office for the Environment and Geology is looking for creative photographic motifs and ideas about soil as the basis of life and a valuable part of our environment. The (digital) photos should have originated in Thuringia.

[Additional information](#)

**Urban Greenery in a New Dimension:** In our growing cities, greenery is under the gun. New ideas for urban open space planning are in demand. The title story in the May issue of the trade magazine IVV describes unusual projects and ideas.

[Additional information](#)

**Mysterious, Threatened Underworld - Cover Story in Nature:** Fifth and last part of the series on the different aspects of biodiversity in the nature journal. Also in this issue: 'Land is limited': An interview with the UN Executive Secretary Monique Barbut.

[Additional information](#)

**The Humus Revolution - How we Can Heal the Soil, Save the Climate and Transform Food:** The new book by Ute Scheub and permaculture expert Stefan Schwarzer deals with the question of how a global humus build-up can reduce the carbon dioxide footprint of the atmosphere to a safe level.

[Additional information](#)

**Newsletter:** The Italian region Emilia Romagna has published a new newsletter: 'CheTerraPesti (bi) Weekly #41, The Earth Beneath your Feet - A Soil Magazine'.

[Additional information](#)

## The Soil Idea

**The Soil Protection Concept (BOKS) Stuttgart:** Since 2006, BOKS is a binding component of Stuttgart's urban planning. BOKS contains basic principles and methods for the planning and administration of qualitative and quantitative utilisation of soils. In the medium term, the intent is to freeze the new consumption of near-natural soils and cover the demand for usable areas in the interior area. The BOKS has been applied for more than 10 years, so there are many experiences that can benefit other cities and municipalities. According to the BOKS model it is easy to develop own concepts.

[Additional information](#)

## Soil Alliance Internal News

**Annual Conference 2017:** Within the framework of the annual conference 2017, the Executive Board passed the 'Urban Gardening - Healthy Soils in Cities and Municipalities', which summarises the main findings and demands of the conference.

[Additional information](#)

**Annual Conference 2017 Post-briefing:** This year's annual conference on the theme of 'Gardening together - enriching municipalities and cities with gardens' took place on 18/19 May 2017 in the state capital Linz, Austria. Central questions about soil protection in the garden, the initiation of new (intercultural) garden projects or the sustainable green and open space design in municipalities were answered practically in workshops and excursions. The presentations of the conference are now available for download.

[Additional information](#)

**New Board elected:** On 19 May 2017, the General Meeting elected a new Executive Board following the annual conference in Linz (Austria). Christian Steiner, state of Lower Austria, was confirmed as Chairman of the Board.

[Additional information](#)

**New members:** Nantes University (France) and the municipality of Scharthen (Austria). Welcome to the European Land and Soil Alliance!

## Event information

**Plenary Assembly of the Global Soil Partnership:** 20 - 22 June 2017, FAO, Rom (Italy)

[Additional information](#)

**Practice days: Sustainable Adaptation for Regions and Municipalities:** 29 – 30 June 2017, Kaufering (Germany)

[Additional information](#)

**The efficient use of land in commercial and industrial zones of small rural communities:** 08 November 2017, Biel (Switzerland)

[Additional information](#)

**Annual Meeting of the German Soil Science Society:** 2 - 7 September 2017, Göttingen (Germany)

[Additional information](#)

**Sustainable Cities 2017 - 12th International Conference on Urban Regeneration and Sustainability:** 18 - 20 September 2017, Seville (Spain)

[Additional information](#)

**Location-appropriate Land Use - Environmentally Friendly and Economical. 129th VDLUFA Conference:** 12 - 15 September 2017, Freising (Germany)

[Additional information](#)

**Pedological Site Support on Construction Sites:** 14 November 2017, Dresden (Germany)

[Additional information](#)

## Imprint

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