

COMMUNITARIAN AND URBAN GARDENS IN BRAGANÇA, PORTUGAL

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Abstract

Since 2011, the Polytechnic Institute of Bragança (IPB), through the Staff Cultural and Recreational Association, welcomes and sponsors a project of communitarian urban gardens carried out in the arable land of its campus.

The project was designed to promote community gardening at leisure time, while focusing on organic and sustainable agricultural practices, providing healthy produce and fresh plants, as well as enjoyable labor/activities, neighborhood improvement, sense of community, connection to the environment and nature, and fostering interaction between users, which come from a broad geographical origin and have different gardening background and knowledge.

In order to report motivation, agricultural performances, the species grown, and to estimate the total production, we surveyed 51 gardens and we did consented interviews to 88 users from a total of 120.

The garden survey has shown that traditional gardening practices combine with innovations introduced by modern agricultural technology and scientific research. Moreover, we reported that past and present come together, particularly regarding the array of species cultivated: species and varieties traditionally used and quite important for local cuisine are grown along with new ones, recently brought in eating habits, considered signs of modernity and globalization.

Produce, traditional practices, novel approaches

- ✓ Tomato, lettuce, onion, beans, peppers, zucchinis, pumpkins, kale, cabbages, herbs and flowers are the most grown
- ✓ Plots of 50 m² : in summer at least 16 species; winter 8 species
- ✓ Animal manure, compost, green manure
- ✓ Mulching and small sheds (straw, plants, plastic, other material)
- ✓ Intercropping
- ✓ Mainly organic farming methods



Economic functions

- ✓ Low-cost food
- ✓ Saving on the familiar budget
- ✓ Sharing among friends and family
- ✓ Interchanging between gardeners
- ✓ Preserving for all year availability
- ✓ 315 € saving for three months per garden



Produce per garden	August	September	October	Total (Kg)	Average price	Total value
Lettuce	0,3	0,1	-	0,4	1,50 €	0,60 €
Leek	0,6	-	-	0,6	1,00 €	0,60 €
Eggplant	2,9	2,9	-	5,8	1,19 €	6,90 €
Broccoli	0,3	-	-	0,3	1,00 €	0,30 €
Onion	2,1	16,9	-	19	1,50 €	28,50 €
Zucchini	49,8	29,1	1,2	80,1	0,90 €	72,09 €
Bean	22,05	0,75	-	22,8	2,25 €	51,30 €
Pepper	4,1	3,1	-	7,2	1,49 €	10,73 €
Cucumber	0,9	3,45	-	4,35	0,98 €	4,26 €
Cabbage	5,1	5,8	-	10,9	0,90 €	9,81 €
Tomato	3,4	71,25	12,5	87,15	1,48 €	128,98 €



Social cultural functions

- ✓ Contact with nature
- ✓ Experiencing planting and harvesting
- ✓ Opportunity to meet people
- ✓ Feeling of doing something useful
- ✓ Resilience of local gardening practices
- ✓ Knowledge transmission

Main reasons for keeping a garden

- ✓ Improved quality of life
- ✓ Enjoyable and profitable hobby
- ✓ Relaxation
- ✓ Growing their own food
- ✓ Positive impact of vegetables on health
- ✓ Healthy and safe produce
- ✓ Particular taste of some local produce

