

HYBRID PARKS

June 2014



Hybrid Workshop in Brittany in April

In April 2014 a delegation of partners from Hybrid Parks joined in Brittany to explore some of the parks and gardens in this region. Site visits and discussions with owners, managers and head gardeners contributed much to a better understanding of the merits and of the economic, environmental and social abilities of the regional garden resource.

The site visits have been well selected to cover a wide range of the issues that are in the focus of the project: Private ownership and economic activities (La Ballue), tourism development (La Bourbansais, with its zoological garden and restored kitchen garden), plants and environment (Jardin du Pelinec), heritage protection (Jardins de Kerdalo), public ownership and educational activities (La Roche Jagu), landscape and environment (Jardin Georges Delaselle), art and gardens (Grand Launay) and restoration of parks and gardens (Le Coscro). (Information about all these gardens on www.apjb.org.)

Thanks to this broad approach and to the wide range of expertise in the group, this Hybrid Workshop was fully in line with the project's slogan of "combining abilities, creating synergies and enhancing the performance of parks for sustainable development policies". Participants filled in a number of questionnaires to ensure a broad evaluation of the parks and gardens and to gather ideas and recommendations for a further enhancement of the assets, their performance and effects.

A first analysis of the outcomes of the workshop shows that the high aesthetic, botanical and heritage values of the parks and gardens as well as their often very remote location seem to be a major restraint for intensified educational use, social inclusion and full accessibility. Compared to parks and gardens in cities or metropolitan areas environmental aspects, such as the mitigation of climate change, are of minor importance too. However, kitchen gardens, organic gardening and the care for certain (rare or local) species, can be considered as environmental benefits achieved by some of the gardens.

From an economic perspective the enormous efforts to maintain the high quality of the gardens was highly acclaimed. This is true for the parks and gardens owned by the public, but even more for the high investments and continuous endowments made by private owners. Raising the public awareness for the high and often unique quality of the parks and gardens and thus increasing the number of visitors and generating additional income are very important to ensure and to justify this level of support in the future. To achieve this, eleven parks and gardens will cooperate in a regional garden route that will also include ten other sites of natural, cultural and touristic value. With support given by regional authorities, the gardens will become partners in the European Garden Heritage Network EGHN, to intensify knowledge exchange and communication and promotion of the garden route on the European level.



The program of the study tour in Linköping focused on the big green parks and major projects characterizing the city. We started with a visit to the "Old Linköping" where large parts of the old and original urban setting with wooden houses and gardens are preserved. This open air museum is attracting both citizens and visitors from outside. In the evening we went by boat along the Kinda canal which is one of the important blue-green lanes in the region. A presentation by the city's ecologist showed how the city works actively for biodiversity on water routes and along the canal.

On the second day the participants were welcomed by the city's mayor in one of the city's oldest houses. We were given an introduction on the project in the social housing district Skäggetorp. On site we visited some of the enhancement areas in the green areas of this district. This included community gardening and venues for sports, cultural events and communication that were started or enhanced during the project period. We also did practical exercises with Linköping University's outdoor education expert to experience importance and resources of the outdoor environment for learning and interaction – as it has been practiced throughout the entire project with the people living here.

From there we moved to the city's pride Horticultural Society, the city park. The park is a large forum where several activities are intermingled and we were introduced to restaurant & cafe, craft, nursery, sports, outdoor education and play for children. Above all, the park is a great green meeting place and recreation spot for residents of Linköping. The City Park is one of the best examples in Sweden for a very active and sympathetic use of city parks. During dinner we had an impressive talk about storytelling and the narrative significance of places.

Day 3 began with a visit to Vreta Clusters where green entrepreneurship meets academia and industry. It is an entrepreneurial mind set with innovations in environmental technology and an ambition to be a creative meeting place for all who work on environmental issues in various industries. We were also informed about the latest technology in cognitive science and possible applications for parks. We had an exchange with a representative from the INTERREG IVB project "Cult Tour", focussing on parks and tourism. The future role of public green was one element in the presentation about "Bo2016", the building exhibition in Linköping in the year 2016.

The study tour ended at the Berg Locks which is one of the largest locks in Sweden and thus an attraction and a green beautiful place for recreation and tourism.



Outlook

With the next editions of the newsletter we will inform you about the results of economic and environmental studies and social surveys carried out by and on behalf of the project (with links to the reports), about the conference in Rhodes and the last workshop in Poland (both with an environmental focus) and about the details of the final conference in Cologne. Here are the next dates:

- Workshop "Environment 2": *Mikolów (Poland), 23rd - 25th July 2014* ([Agenda for download](#))
- Final Conference: *Cologne (Germany), 15th - 16th September 2014*

The conference is open to a wider professional audience, while the workshop can welcome a limited number of external participants. Please [send a request](#) to the Lead Partner for information, registration and confirmation.

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