

Press release, May 2013

School gardens popular again: Green success in Copenhagen

School gardens have existed in Denmark since 1903, but have lived a quiet life since their heyday in the 1950s. Now the gardens are going through another major resurgence and demand. A great interest in teaching children about nature and the origin of food has put school gardens on the Copenhagen schools' timetables again.

The school gardens in Copenhagen are run by the 'Association of Copenhagen School Gardens' (Københavns Skolehaver), which is currently experiencing such a success with the gardens that there is now a waiting list for school classes that want a garden. Each week 1400 children in Copenhagen get the opportunity to get their hands dirty in the gardens, listen to birds singing and make bonfires – among many other things. 35 school classes have 'gardening' on their timetable, and every week they get - together with kindergarten and children clubs - the opportunity to learn about growing and nature.

Physical work, such as spreading manure, sowing, pruning, feeding the chickens and picking fruit - combined with teachers' ability to link each activity to the theory of nature, environment and food, provides a highly potent learning cocktail, which, according to the head of the school gardens, Camilla Friedrichsen, excites the children immensely.

"Good schooling is all about linking theory with practice. Here in the school gardens, children can touch, do, feel, and experience. That is 'learning by gardening', and it provides professionally competent and happy children," says Camilla Friedrichsen and elaborates: "Here they participate in real activities that are meaningful - it's so much easier to understand the miracle of a potato when you spread the manure, put it in the soil, harvest it and make potato soup over an open fire. It's learning with all your senses, and therefore learning for life. The school gardens help create foundations for the next generation and make them aware of nature and the link between the environment and food."

Facts about school gardens

School gardens in Copenhagen have become so popular that now there are too few school gardens to meet demand. Each week The Association of Copenhagen School Gardens receive enquiries from interested schools – and others – who want to start up school gardens and other garden projects.

Internationally, there is a strong school garden movement, e.g. the US, Canada, England and Germany have many school gardens and extensive experience with the use of school gardens in education.

It is possible to visit the school gardens in Copenhagen and learn more about them.

For more information, please contact:

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Press photos that can be used when featuring the School Gardens in Copenhagen:

Children harvest rhubarbs in May (Photo: Camilla Friedrichsen):

http://oekologi.dk/download/DSC_1076.jpg

Children in the School Gardens (Photo:Camilla Friedrichsen):

http://oekologi.dk/download/DSC_0120.jpg

Children spread horse manure (Photo:Camilla Friedrichsen):

http://oekologi.dk/download/DSC_0462.jpg

Children cooking with the produce from the gardens (Photo:Camilla Friedrichsen):

http://oekologi.dk/download/DSC_109.jpg