

# Our Community Garden Rosa Rose





## **The community garden**

**For many years in our neighbourhood there were three properties of fallow land lying next to each other that were unused. These lots comprised 2000 m<sup>2</sup> that was full of waste and rubbish in Friedrichshain, a district of Berlin that really lacks green areas. Since then we have removed the rubbish and hauled in several tons of clean soil for a community garden.**

**The garden has become a community center for the neighbourhood. Now we are in danger of losing this space as the owner would like to sell it. We would like to purchase the property in order to continue providing a central point for our community.**

**We...**

**are approximately 30 people from different countries and of different ages that live more or less close to the above mentioned area.**

**We have been actively working on the garden since May 2004. We are openly organized – so everyone is invited to join us!**

**We organize cultural events and workshops as well as training courses and classes. We meet there for gardening, drinking coffee and tea, and to enjoy some sunny days in the center of the city. Since we created a meeting place that is open for everybody in the neighbourhood, we no longer see our neighbours as strangers. Because of our community garden, people speak to each other and spend time with each other. Neighbourhood children can be seen playing among adults that have become friends.**



# Why a neighbourhood garden in Berlin-Friedrichshain?

There are few neighbourhood networks, not only in Friedrichshain, but other parts of the city, as well. The public area is becoming increasingly commercialized. Such spaces often charge an entrance fee. As a consequence people that do not cope with the pressure of consumption, become isolated. Particularly affected by this development are people with lesser incomes and also unemployed or older people. Our neighbourhood has a 20% unemployment rate.



In city centers everywhere, there are fewer places that are close to residential areas where people can meet and get to know each other without having to pay money for the privilege.



The neighbourhood garden on the open space tries to counteract the effects of this development. To the residents, the garden offers the possibility of actively participating almost without financial expenditures in a joint, intergenerative project, to get to know other people, and to experiment with and develop skills involving handcrafts, gardening, or artistic activities.

# How everything began...

In May 2004 some inhabitants/neighbours from the Kinzigstraße (Kinzig Street) start to campaign for the project “Neighbourhood Garden Rosa Rose” (engl.: Pink Rose).

We posted a building/construction sign and some posters with the expectation of having cake together as a meeting of some of the people from the neighbourhood. The goal was to make a garden from the fallow land. People from very different backgrounds came together: housewives, architects, pensioners, dog owners, artists, and students. There were so many ideas for our garden dream!



## The waste/garbage had to be taken away...

The first action that we undertook together, was to remove waste from the garden. On one Sunday we collected all the garbage that we found on the area: refrigerators, televisions, garbage bags, old dresses, etc. ("dog excrement/waste/dirt").



Besides completing the work, we had coffee and cake and continued to know each other. We spoke about our ideas of how to change the area into a beautiful garden.

## ...and the energetic activities

For almost three years we have been meeting on a regular basis for discussion, working, organizing, building, planning, gardening, celebrating and eating together. Our garden became an important place for the entire neighbourhood! Many neighbours use this open area for

their weddings, birthday celebrations, cinema evenings and readings. We also organize regularly garden parties for the entire neighbourhood!

The activities that take place in our garden are always inclusive of many types of people.

From children to the elderly, from immigrants

to the gay and lesbian members of our community, we strive for equality and empowerment. Recently, some of the events for Ladyfest Berlin took place in the Rosa Rose community garden.



# Our vegetable garden

Despite the difficult soil conditions, for three years we have been planting our own vegetables. As nobody is able to invest, a great deal of cash and material donations were collected. It was amazing how the different contacts of community members complemented each other. We collected soil for many new garden beds, seeds, small trees, bushes and shrubs, maize fields, old stones for field enclosures and path limitations.

Last summer we also received a small trailer in which we store garden equipment.

Our group of gardeners grew larger and became more international over the the years and grown to a approximately 10 regular and 30 occasional users from seven different countries (England, Italy, Spain, Germany, Poland, the USA, Austria).



# Dreams for our

For us a neighbourhood garden is:

...one commonly used  
green area in short  
distance to the  
residential/housing  
areas



...where one can  
relax and enjoy the sun



...where one can meet neighbours

...a space for different types of use,  
according to the preferences of the  
community

...an important place for neighbours' communication,  
which strengthens the necessary social co-operation.

# Neighbourhood Garden

We want to establish our neighbourhood garden on a long-term basis and are searching for options that will make this possible. To achieve this goal we require a broad range of support.



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**Please, donate to:**

**Symbiose e.V.**

**Bank-account:**

**Berliner Volksbank**

**BLZ: 100 900 00**

**Account: 5607 6290 15**

**IBAN: DE16 1009 0000 5607 6290 15**

**BIC: BEVODEBB**



