



## PLAYING/FIELD MARZAHN - community garden and open school garden at the same time



### History

The Playing/Field Marzahn is an urban agriculture project located in the north-eastern part of Berlin in the borough of Marzahn-Hellersdorf.

In spring 2010, a group of students studying landscape architecture and environmental planning at the Technical University of Berlin, directed by Katrin Bohn from the Department City & Nutrition, developed a community garden on a fallow plot of land in close cooperation with the local borough office and many different local organisations. After a three-year process of participation, communication, establishing presence and rallying support, the Playing/Field became independent, and in 2014 the association Playing/Field Marzahn e.V. was founded by local resident gardeners. The annual membership fee allows them to cultivate their own small plots of land.

The whole fallow area belongs to the local borough; the association pays an annual lease for using the community garden space. Like many other urban gardens Playing/Field Marzahn also deals with the pressures of efficient space usage (Nutzungsdruck), which have already compromised former urban open space because of the growing need for living space.

The whole area, comprising 600 square metres, is divided into three different 'fields'. There are 22 small plots (different sizes), which are cultivated by 11 local gardeners, 3 nearby schools, 8 are unoccupied.

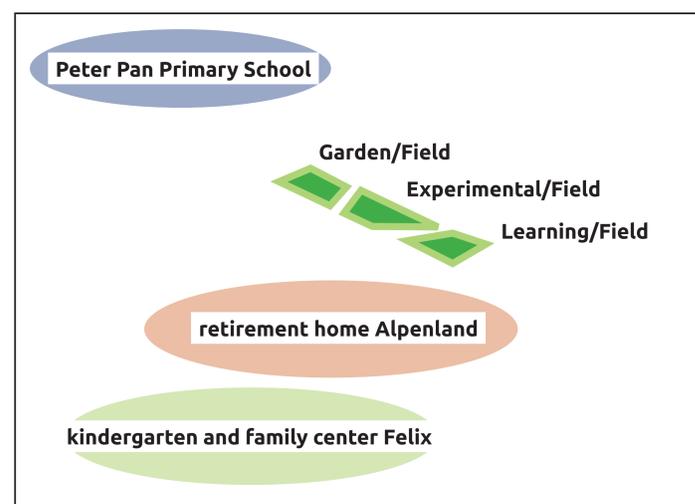


Figure: overview Playing/Field, splitting into three parts: Learning/Field, Garden/Field, Experimental/Field

### Parzelle X

Parzelle X's work specializes on the combination of classical landscape architecture with elements of nature education. As an interface between theory and practice our field of activity reaches out from conceptual design to practical school gardening lessons. On institutional and practical levels we focus on environmental education as well as healthy nutrition and highlighting the growing importance of future-oriented systems of food production.





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berry- and potato feast. Challenges like maintenance holes (summer holidays) can be solved through involving different local stakeholders. A common infrastructure can be used, while responsibilities can be shared. Participation in competitions provides an opportunity to acquire financial support for the local school and the association.

### Philosophy

By organising school garden activities within a community garden, the usually closed and exclusive school garden is transformed into an inclusive space for learning. The close cooperation between the two types of garden generates various added values for the children, local residents and the neighbourhood.

The garden is a place of encounter, communication and integration as well as collaborative activity, encouraging participation and a sense of belonging to one's local community. Communal events help to promote voluntary public service, and by working together towards a goal as a group such teams prove indispensable in today's urban cityscape.

The contribution the school garden makes to district development and the design and use of open space supports neighbourhood cooperation and intergenerational understanding. Above all the project works towards highly important goals such as securing biodiversity and supporting a healthy way of life.

### Setting

Learning/Field: A project run by some of the resident gardeners and staff from a local school and two nurseries to get children involved in gardening and healthy eating, run on an area of 200 square metres. Since 2013 the group has offered integrated school gardening lessons with children from the Peter-Pan primary school. The method combines traditional school garden lessons and elements of nature education. By interacting with all the different senses and exploring the diverse possibilities for experimentation, the children are able to generate their own experiences, knowledge and skills in many different ways. Especially in these times of technological dependence, globalisation and influence by the media, it is important to raise the children's awareness: both of their responsibility towards their surroundings, and of the potential to drive change through showing a good example with their own actions.

During the gardening season the school gardening lessons take place two days a week at the Peter-Pan primary school. In the holidays there is a weekly gardening club for the after-school-care-kids. The school garden team consists of four freelancers and one ambitious and passionate volunteer gardener (local resident). In addition to the gardening lessons there are several seasonal activities to keep up the dialogue between the children, the parents and the local residents. Some of these activities are the annual spring-cleaning, which is supported by the BSR and the nearby nurseries, or the



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