

SLOW FOOD GARDENS IN AFRICA MANIFESTO

FOOD GARDENS AS AN INSTRUMENT OF THE SLOW FOOD NETWORK

o Created by the community for the community

- They bring together community members uniting different generations and social groups, and value their capacities;
- Products from the gardens supply families and school canteens, so that the people involved can have daily access to fresh, natural and local foods;
- The community members organize themselves and work voluntarily in the garden.

o Open-air classrooms

- Food gardens offer an excellent opportunity to raise awareness on the importance of native fruits and vegetables, as well as to promote a healthy and varied diet, explaining how to avoid using chemicals;
- Every garden is as unique as every specific territory;
- Communities are trained on the principles of sustainable agriculture.

o A network of gardens within the Slow Food movement

- The Slow Food gardens represent an opportunity to gather and reflect together on activities related to the conservation of local biodiversity such as the exchange of seeds, ideas, information, meals etc.;
- The gardens are a tool for better understanding how Slow Food operates both at local, national and international level and inspire community members to take action in their own territory;
- For the local Slow Food convivium/group the garden is an instrument to stimulate the community, as well as to propagate the Slow Food philosophy and integrate more people into the movement.

FOOD GARDENS TO PRESERVE LOCAL BIODIVERSITY

- The gardens build on the contribution of each participant and on the resources available within the territory;
- They represent practical models of sustainable agriculture, small-scale and easily replicable, based on the observation of the surrounding space and available resources;
- A limited surface is enough to start off a food garden and produce fresh fruits and vegetables on a daily basis;
- The crops are selected from local varieties and constitute the ingredients in traditional dishes;
- Through the gardens, plant varieties at risk of extinction are identified and safeguarded.

o Agroecological spaces reflecting local agro-biodiversity

- Agroecology is a practice based on balanced systems, which take into consideration the environment as a whole. These systems have a reduced dependency on external inputs and thus are able to achieve autonomy and sustainability;
- Soil fertility is improved through the integration of compost and organic fertilizers, as well as applying practices such as crop rotation and intercropping;
- Natural (traditional, non petroleum-based) remedies (for example herbal blends, ashes) are used to combat pests and diseases;
- Water use is rationalized;
- The self-production of seeds allows increased autonomy in regards to the agro-industry, market volatility and selecting plants better adapted to the local agro-ecological conditions.

The mobilization of local human and material resources and the commitment of members of the Slow Food network are key to the sustainability of food gardens.