

Much research on the environment ignores aspects related to human investment and human involvement which are sensory and corporeal, as well as significant and formal, and, therefore aesthetic. Yet everyday activities, language, and narratives work aesthetically to create an urban environment that becomes a living space. This is one of the conditions of urban habitability. How do we make a place habitable? We cannot reduce such a vast issue to an analysis of the sum of its physical parts without sidestepping the requisite human creativity; but we cannot reduce it to a human invention either, which would omit the material, natural and built foundations of individual and collective actions. We shall thus state that a habitable place is one which offers individuals sufficient creative opportunity and the possibility of adapting it sufficiently to make it their own; as difficult as it is to interpret and understand such a process, the appropriation of a place relies on detailed knowledge of the living conditions that such a place can offer. To live somewhere, no one can ignore the natural and built materiality of a territory (as the body requires us to adapt to it) or even the symbolic registers (i.e., the way ordinary language provides access to a territory) which allow the local community to gain a foothold there. Seen in this light, the environment is not an objective element, nor a subjective creation, but rather the collection of *miliens* (places) that it is considered culturally possible to inhabit and transform into a living space.

#### **Inhabiting: an aesthetic and ecological concept**

Can the habitability of a living space be evaluated? Do specific techniques or methods do so exist? To begin, we must examine the multiple sensory, imaginative, and significant – thus aesthetic – relationships with the environment. For an environment to exist as a living space, its inhabitants must be able to appropriate it aesthetically. And while the term environment refers to the many and varied connections that a living being develops in their relationship with a place, this is not sufficient: each organism adapts to its environment by using processes of creative adaptation and learning; such processes can be described as “active environmentalisation”. They introduce an aesthetic understanding of the world and help transform it into a living space.

But what do we mean by aesthetic here? It is not the specialised philosophical field that we wish to address: not philosophy of art or philosophy of beauty or theories of taste. We are referring to environmental aesthetics<sup>1</sup>, an area of research that is developing rapidly in the English-speaking world. The researchers involved want to move beyond references to works of art and landscape which have been the exclusive domain of traditional aesthetics and promote the aesthetic experience of nature and of everyday environments. The philosopher Emily Brady has argued that natural environments are not only experienced as landscapes, but also as environments in which the aesthetic subject appreciates nature as dynamic, changing, and evolving. She takes an aesthetic approach which, depending on its different forms, draws on ecological knowledge, imagination, emotion, and a fresh understanding of

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<sup>1</sup> This research follows in the tradition of research and techniques which try to assess the aesthetic aspects of the environmentalisation processes, understood as active and open procedures for engaging with an environment. See the work of Arnold Berleant (1992), Allen Carlson and Arnold Berleant (2004), Emily Brady (2003), etc.

nature as a bearer of its own narrative (Brady, 2007, p. 64). An aesthetic reading of the environment exists that is not limited to art or cultural monuments. A rich understanding of living spaces and the environment is thus not uniquely a question of psychology or a reflection of the essential beauty of a place; it comes from the culturally defined ways in which a place is assessed (notably by a language and how this language is used). An anthropological approach, based on what populations expect from an environment, is fundamental to appropriately addressing the housing needs of residents.

Urban habitability must also address an ecological question: it is a matter of ensuring the global capacity of a city's spaces to offer services (water for recreational purposes, drinking water, air, green spaces, etc.; in other words "ecosystematic services") and to ensure a quality habitat over time. Such services do not exist independently of the capacity of residents to transform raw materials and give them aesthetic value. As such, ecosystem services can be put into categories: supply, regulation (e.g., air or water purification), enrichment and the cultural dimension (including aesthetic values). However, negative urban externalities (noise, pollution, etc.) and the redistributive effects of urban policies must not be forgotten; real estate, land and property mechanisms, i.e., the urban economy, create environmental inequalities (and thus an unequal distribution of the above-mentioned urban services).

We must not overlook the fact that such an approach needs to take urban explosion<sup>2</sup> into account from a qualitative and quantitative perspective: it represents a collection of threats, but also of potential resources for the environment. Such growth occurs on the outskirts of cities, contributes to urban sprawl and thus to increased urbanisation that mixes urban and rural, most often under dramatic circumstances since most urban growth in Southern-hemisphere countries occurs in slums<sup>3</sup>. Such growth occurs in extremely precarious conditions and forces inhabitants to be creative with regard to how they live. We need to take a new look at questions about living in Northern- and Southern-hemisphere countries. Beyond addressing amenities or quality of life, we need to look at the capacity of populations to create living spaces for themselves in increasingly difficult situations (limited housing markets, pressure from real estate prices, rural/urban migration, scarce food resources, etc.). Living somewhere often means successfully striking a balance between the cost of housing, security of ownership, environmental and air quality, travel time to work and, occasionally, personal safety. For many, being close to their workplace is essential, no matter how unstable a situation it engenders. Living somewhere is tied to various factors (recreational, economic, commercial, etc.) and to utilitarian use. So living in a given place essentially becomes a challenge in terms of accessibility and proximity to services. It is thus a matter of finding (or

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<sup>2</sup> In 2007, for the first time in the history of humanity, more people lived in medium-sized or large cities than in the countryside due to rural exodus: of the 6.122 billion people on the planet in 2000, 46.6% of them lived in cities; in 2025, it is anticipated that 60% of the 8.206 billion inhabitants will live in large urban centres which will have profoundly changed. Urban population explosion is accompanied by serious environmental problems: cities make up only 2% of the surface area of the planet, but consume three quarters of the resources used each year. Such growth is synonymous with an explosion in precarious types of dwellings and an increase in poverty. In 2003, the United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habitat) conducted an audit on urban poverty ("The challenge of slums") which put the number of people living in slums in 2005 at over one billion. This population is currently increasing at a rate of 25 million people per year.

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wanting to create) a balance between the challenges of development which are often tied to the accumulation of wealth in cities (benefiting a minority of wealthy and middle class people, rather than focusing on development and the reduction of poverty, of which slums are only the tip of the iceberg), and urban resilience which can be defined as the capacity of urban ecosystems to reconstitute themselves after a shock.

We shall begin by distinguishing between the notions of *habitat* and *inhabiting*, the conceptual term “ways of living” ranges in meaning from a social representation of a place to individual and collective action in a place, and the notion of habitability involves a conceptual analysis of the relationship between social and ecological analysis. How can aesthetics help us address this issue? We shall argue that such an approach leads to a subjective understanding of spaces as well as to aesthetically-motivated environmental action and to the creation of “aesthetic public spaces”. It is in this sense that resident movements and environmental mobilisation allow an environment to be considered habitable – that is, as a living space – taking account of the resources present i.e., the existing animal and plant life.

### **Habitat, inhabiting**

The verb to inhabit generally has a double meaning (see diagram 10.1). Its active meaning describes a system of activities, a way of appropriating a space and, since at least the 19th century, its passive meaning describes the idea of being inhabited, in the sense of being haunted, but can also refer to spatial categories of geography and spatial planning. In the operational and scientific field of habitat, there are a series of terms which exclude the individual and its way of living and instead focus on the types of habitat dictated by public policy and urban economics. The current terminological richness is probably due to historical changes in human population management, but also in representations of populating nature with animal and plant life. Thus, the habitat approach describes a policy for living beings which is driven by numbers and masses of people. As such, we can describe a whole series of spaces (inside, outside, peri-urban, downtown, etc.) that disregard the underlying uses which define and reproduce them over time and in space, or even the “life forms” that characterise them, i.e., the “ways of living” that underpin a community and its history. These are the customs embedded in places themselves, in their spatial layout, the everyday movement in such places, in bodies and their temporal and spatial disposition... In brief, they are the rituals which define a place and give it a unique tone. Of course, a “ways of living” approach aims to examine active ways of living; it is a new conceptual approach to what defines ways of living, rather than a passive and static approach to the use of a place, and it is much more focused on perception and cognition (mind maps, etc.).

>> Insert diagram 10.1 about here

Who is affected by such relations? It is inhabitants who have become key figures, notably with the rise of governance, dialogue and participatory procedures. This is reflected in their language, practices and representations of places, as well as in their uses, local living habits and ways of living. Next, it is elected officials, planning authorities and citizens who govern habitat through the mechanisms and rules of urban planning which can create new ways of living (in connection with international agencies which are increasingly involved with urban policy by circumventing the national level and working directly with local NGOs (Davis, 2006, p.74 sq.): such possibilities for living need to be thought out in context and in a gradual manner, which is difficult today due to poverty, insufficient political will and the fragmentation of the social sector, as well as due to how habitat is conceived, to the extent

that architecture as currently practiced has trouble taking the lifecycles and cultural models of inhabitants into account. Lastly, it is the city-based NGOs and international institutions such as the World Bank who are also involved with local urban development and anti-poverty policies.

### **Aesthetic and environmental mobilisation**

The actors in a city can rally around the environment; such environmental mobilisation points to a redefinition of habitability which combines aesthetics and ecology (see also the article by Lolive included in this collection). Researchers are increasingly focusing on mobilisation (Cefai, 2007; Juan, 2007) and environmental inequality (Ifen, 2007) based on feelings of injustice or inequality in terms of access to the environment (whether this access is territorial, or even in terms of challenging public authorities about the transformation of living conditions). Other approaches examine perceptions of the environment and the state of the environment (Bartlett, 2005; Moser, 2003)<sup>4</sup>. Some are reifying (Honneth, 2006; Paperman, Laugier, 2005) and ignore the fundamental role that the environment plays in identity and in identifying with one's community through "ways of living" or living habits (if we focus on the environmental aspect of the expression and not on life as devoid of all substrata). They also ignore the fact that we do not act according to principles but rather in reaction to the course of life, and we constantly juggle extremely diverse desires and imperatives (court injunctions, family or community imperatives, immediate worries about well being, etc.), and have an idea of self, of our role in the social sphere (as poor, female, black, etc.). As such, we need to look at practices in order to examine how an environment becomes a preoccupation in daily life.

Moreover, we should not reduce the social sciences to a given role: the study of the environmental impact of human activities or the study of how research in the natural sciences is applied to public policy and individual and social behaviour. The social side of the environment is not about the careful sustainable development of natural resources and what this means on an economic or social level. The city is not only ecology (in the sense of air quality, preserving ecosystems, managing water, etc.). We must not forget that the city is first and foremost a living space for its inhabitants. People have usual, "close surroundings" in which daily life occurs, representing the environment they experience; these are "ordinary surroundings" regardless of whether they have been impaired (by heavy pollution, for example). They are not exceptional, great natural environments like the poles or biosphere reserves: they are banal, "ordinary environments".

By a "sustainable" environmental process, we mean that which can be integrated over the long term into a given culture and materiality. It implies involving the perceptions and habits of local populations, taking symbolic and artistic dimensions into account, things which are creative and transform living spaces, as well as the physical and biological facets of this materiality. Applied to an environment, the term "sustainable" consists in thinking that in a

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<sup>4</sup> The types of issues which inspired "environmental sociology" largely transcend issues related to the deterioration of natural equilibria and biodiversity. The artificialisation of virtually the entire inhabited world means that the field is now opening up to new questions about what creates and destroys quality of life, as well as who is generating techno-scientific threats, "risks" for the planet (and its surroundings), and conditions of human vulnerability.

democratic system, the involvement of residents guarantees respect for the environment: “appropriable” is one dimension of sustainable<sup>5</sup>.

It is in this sense that we need to think about how daily life is involved in the creative construction of places and living spaces through the production of objects, gardens or green spaces, collective or individual projects, and show how places are jointly constructed. An environmental approach reveals that it is necessary not merely to study environmental sensitivity, but also that an environmental art desperately needs to be developed: the environment is an art, an eminently social art, and the collective art of a living space. It is as such that we draw on the disciplinary field of aesthetics to nurture our research.

But how can we define such an aesthetic? We can of course list its content with categorical descriptions such as sensory and sensorial, but we can also assign it a reason, goal or aim. As such, the aesthetic becomes primarily a learning process. The art form serves as a place of investigation and self-discovery for taste; the environmental aesthetics we refer to here are a sphere for learning about inter-individual sociability and the communicability of environmental experiences in different places. It is about triggering the conditions which pave the way for an environmental culture and social life. Kant (1995, p. 344) argues that an age which is distanced from nature will have to teach its people to evaluate their own actions by uniting “the law-directed constraint belonging to the highest culture, with the force and rightness of a free nature aware of its proper worth.” Yet the free nature which is conscious of its own worth is none other than mankind learning for itself what it needs to do (or not do). The freedom advocated is not innocuous; it harnesses sensory experience (the five senses: smell, hearing, sight, touch and taste) which involves sensitivity; it involves a representation of the environment which categorically takes the expressive diversity of urban cultures into account.

Traditionally, political scientists’ and sociologists’ analyses of mobilisation have focused on the structural conditions for development and on the success of social movements, to the detriment of the experiences, emotions and motivations of those involved. Focusing too closely on the mechanics at work and the available resources sometimes clouds out an important condition for mobilisation and its understanding: the role of sensitivities and beliefs, feelings of injustice and belief in the righteousness of a protest (Blanc, Lolive, 2007). Such environmental mobilisation can be examined in terms of aesthetic involvement; this is demonstrated by what is referred to (landscape, surroundings, basic amenities, the beauty of gardens or flower beds, etc.) to justify getting involved, as well as by the people who participate in such mobilisation (residents, but also artists, landscapers, architects, etc.). In this sense, aesthetic understanding is at the root of the world's habitability.

### **Animal and vegetable matter**

Landscape conflicts and some types of urban mobilisation reveal a new strategy towards aestheticising public spaces (Lolive, 2006; Blanc, 2008) which relies on close ties and aesthetic experience - and thus the rules of public debate - to transform public spaces. They are also evidence of a change in perception of habitability; beyond a need to reconnect with the natural world and improve quality of life, such conflicts and demands reveal an increasing sensitivity to environmental issues - inter alia biodiversity - in the public sphere. We need to articulate what is already being expressed on an ecosystemic level more effectively: city dwellers’ desire for nature, be it through gardening, walking in green spaces

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<sup>5</sup> The “New urban planning” defined at the World Urban Forum in Vancouver in 2006 insists on the fact that options for development must come from the field.

or relationships with animals and other life in the city and, more generally, the issue of urban biodiversity (see Clergeau's article in this collection). Cities in the North (Paris, Stockholm and even New York) and the South (Cape Town, Sao Paolo) are increasingly interested in biodiversity<sup>6</sup>. In European cities, the issue primarily concerns living conditions; in cities in the South, the social aspect and food resources predominate. Such interest addresses issues raised by the expansion of urban systems and their impact on land and biodiversity. Cities play an influential role in eroding biodiversity due to the pressure they place on their direct and indirect environments. They also play a creative role... In the broader analysis, urban biodiversity is a minor issue. Yet, such questions require us to think about urban spaces as composite spaces. Urban sprawl leads to "hybridisation" of spaces, as well as species, and the city becomes home to species from other ecosystems (the cockroach originally comes from the tropics, for example).

The increasing variety of urban gardens - allotments, community gardens, shared gardens, or nomadic gardens, etc. - highlights the demand for reconnecting with the natural world and for a real aesthetic experience. Allotment gardens, which began to make a comeback in the 1990s, are often a collection of large individual gardens near a source of water. The "shared" or "community" gardens of the 1990s and 2000s (see diagram 10.2) are a move away from this model and are often directly inspired by the New York experience (for example, *AJONCs* in Lille, France: "Open gardens which are nonetheless closed"). The same approach is taken with the appropriation of derelict urban space, with the emphasis on the convivial side of things and on fostering social and inter-generational ties. The gardens may be open to the public or divided into open, individual lots, but all resources (tools, seeds, etc.) and produce are generally shared. Similar to the New York experience, non-profit groups have supported inhabitants who want to create gardens: *AJONCs* in Lille, *Jardins d'aujourd'hui* in Bordeaux, *Graines de jardin* in Paris, *Jardins d'Amélie* in Marseille and *Passe-jardin* in Lyon. Together they form a national network called "*Le jardin dans tous ses états*" (the garden in all its different guises). A common aspect of their approach is to support a project only if there is sufficient enthusiasm from residents. Such initiatives have recently begun to receive the support of municipalities who put land at their disposal. In other contexts, institutions, particularly those in charge of urban policy, have created community gardens for urban social development programmes in underprivileged neighbourhoods. But such top-down approaches rarely succeed in getting residents on board and often encounter problems related to the procurement of land from social housing providers. Finally, the development of shared gardens is also tied to renewed urban and semi-urban agriculture, which often plays a role in social integration (the *Jardins de Cocagne*) or in safeguarding farmers' income (*AMAPs* - Community supported agriculture).

>> Insert diagram 10.2 about here

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<sup>6</sup> See the "Biodiversity: Science and Governance" conference organised by France and UNESCO in 2001: <http://www.unesco.org/mab/index.htm>. How can education and fostering environmental awareness contribute to creating strategies which avoid a decline in biodiversity in an increasingly urban European space? The third commitment of the Aalborg Charter signed by the City of Paris in 2007 refers to the responsibility to protect and ensure fair access to common goods, including biodiversity. These are assessed namely by the services they provide to the human species (food, pharmacopoeia, etc.). The 2010 countdown recognised the importance of work with municipalities and cities to ensure that this goal is met. The Dutch city of Tilburg is the first to have signed this commitment. See Countdown2010.net.

Similarly, an appropriation of the city through animal matter has led to new urban practices; aside from transforming the “mineral space” (or that perceived as such in the city) into living space, there are also new ways to domesticate urban space. Animals encourage companionship; they are one element in residents’ narratives of urban life; as living beings, they accompany numerous city dwellers in their day-to-day life and sociability. Animals encourage dialogue, even if there are no words involved. They are part of nature in cities, despite not being a recognised part of the layout or contributing to the mechanical rhythm of urban life... Is it possible that animals in the city, which had been relegated to mere pets or nuisances, might become part of the aesthetic basis of a renewed relationship with nature and life in the city?

It is in this perspective that previous surveys about the place of different animal species in different types of neighbourhoods in Paris, Lyon and Rennes were re-examined (Blanc, 2000). The individualisation of animals occurs through companionship. Domestic animals transform public spaces into potential meeting places for owners; they encourage communication and the development of urban sociability. Studying the relationship with animals requires us to address the place of nature when deciding whether to live in a house, building or city; outdoor access, halls in a building, space available, etc.. An animal’s presence “unleashes” us from concrete concerns and brings the private sphere of a home into contact with the public space. Animals are a part of city dwellers’ need for relationships and, as such, can influence the social course of city life, whereas plant life, which is static, is only one component in the space where some city dwellers’ activities occur. The absence of animals from urban planning texts is evidence of this difference in status. Another reading gives animals a mythical dimension and justifies their reintegration into the heart of the city. The Eden-like setting of animal feeders draws on a utopian vision of the city, of Paradise, as one pet sitter in Paris’ 19<sup>th</sup> *arrondissement* (district) has explained, “the animal is part of nature; without it our environment would be strictly reduced to lifeless nature surrounded by concrete. For mankind, the presence of animals in the city is an indispensable source of balance and harmony. This presence must, of course, remain within reasonable limits.” Advocacy for urban landscape is connected to well-being; one must be satisfied with life in the city to be able to look at, admire and contemplate urban spaces. To really get involved, one must feel good and have a sort of balance between desire for life and living conditions; in brief, the feeling of having a good quality of life. Aesthetics play a part in this quality since it basically depends on the shared – cultural or social – pleasure generated by the environment.

Numerous observations attest to the fact that despite changes in perceptions (and in talk about sustainable development at international level), the cultural dimension of living somewhere – and the aesthetic prism is one major facet – remains limited to “window dressing” policies around constructed and natural historic sites. Sustainable urban development policies pay little attention to inhabitants, and participatory activities are always more symbolic than rooted in concrete issues related to urban co-production. If we push further, it is obvious that whether formulated as a purely formal issue regarding appearance and urban decor, or in rational terms such as here, aesthetics are not generally taken into consideration. In reality, even though there has been much research in the areas of “urban ecology”, “urban environment” and “sustainable cities”, this has primarily been carried out by institutes with operative imperatives. For many decision-makers, urban ecology should primarily be a discipline devoted to helping manage cities. It is a political endeavour<sup>7</sup>. The

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<sup>7</sup> There are at least two approaches to action regarding cities: many researchers have taken a critical approach to urban policy (Lefebvre, Chombart de Lawe, etc.); others, currently more numerous, have chosen to accompany such policies in the fields of urban planning, city policy and urban social policy.

importance of urban engineering in the creation and management of cities limits the involvement of disciplines with a different conception of how urban life works; involvement is further limited by the distrust of sensory thinking found in literature and art - whether mass produced or not - and disconnected from the issues of urban governance. One final point needs to be raised which reveals the extent of the difficulty in developing the field intellectually: for the dominant scientific-political current, sustainable development involves taking global indicators into account and “neglecting immediate, local and visible problems” (C. Brodhag, N. Gondran and K. Delchet, 2004, quoted by N. Mathieu *et al.*, 2005). Can we avoid a more radical appropriation of “sustainable development” and its imperatives? Such democratisation is urgently needed and the challenge is a tough one: “this category which is both thought and action, its polysemy, the plurality of dimensions that it aims to reconcile (ecological, social and ethical), and its complex, contradictory and temporal nature, make it an issue which mixes the sciences and politics...” (Mathieu, Guermond, 2005, p.13). Can we imagine a future – since “sustainable development” necessarily involves weighing up the effects of actions taken and thinking about the future – reduced to social, economic and environmental topics, which ignores the aesthetic importance of everyday lifestyles? Securing acceptable living conditions, in time and space, for a large number of people is more complex and sensitive than a catalogue of actions describing a fragmented ideology: sustainable transportation, reducing energy consumption, nature in the city, the fight against urban sprawl, etc. Sustainable development policies cannot be framed solely by elites, no matter how scientific, since it is complex, requires vigilance and must be based on the capacity of individuals to produce new narratives and means of action in public spaces. It is towards this that our efforts must now turn: we have set out the facts, now we need to get to work.

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Issues surrounding the urban environment have mostly led to nuisance-control policies (noise, pollution, etc.) or dealt with gardens and green spaces to the detriment of the scientific sphere.



### **Insert 10.1: Habitat and inhabiting**

To inhabit is a transitive verb which, from the 12<sup>th</sup> century onward, referred to the customary occupation of a space. It comes from the Latin *habitare* which is one grammatical form (frequentative) of the verb *habere* (to have). The term inhabitant is the substantive present participle which describes “a living being who occupies a space (the inhabitants of a country)” and, more specifically, a “person who usually inhabits a given place”. This also applies to non-human species, such as wild animals, birds, and fish as the inhabitants of forests, air and water. Habitat is a more recent term (19<sup>th</sup> century) which describes a “space which offers conditions conducive to life and to the development of animal or plant species” and, in human geography, “all conditions that cover mankind’s organisation and populating of the places where he lives”. Habitability is a nominalisation (whose use was first recorded in 1801) which describes the quality of a space which is large enough to occupy or the quality of that which is inhabitable because of the favourable conditions found there. Aside from these three terms, we can mention “ways of living” [in French this is *modes d’habiter*, or literally *ways of inhabiting*], which refers to a natural and material heritage which is reclaimed, actively transformed and adapted to contemporary reality... "There are active means of inhabiting: inhabiting, individual, activity, activity system, inhabitant practices, in other words, the subject who inhabits, but also the passive sense: to be inhabited, ecological footprint, geographical inertia, stacking up, uninhabited, habitable, uninhabitable. Beyond this, the ways of living expression refers to multi-scalar and multi-categorical approaches, [...] which require us to identify levels and relationships between levels, as opposed to many expressions and concepts which tend towards the global sphere instead of the local sphere. Ways of living also refers to time and de-reifies mobility [...]. Ways of living refers to individuals and their habits, including those of the *habitus* [...]. It refers to the ecological habits of residents [...]. Ways of living is bound up with ecological conscience, a natural culture, acting and being conscious of effects, of relations with plant life (biodiversity, wild, spontaneous), animal life, desired or undesired, choice and awareness of the effect of choices.”

Source: Mathieu *et al.*, 2003.

### **Insert 10.2**

In New York City, there are roughly 700 community gardens managed in many different ways. In Canada, there are also numerous community gardens. Many produce food: vegetables, fruit, etc. The Green Guerillas define their goal as follows: to help “thousands of people realize their dreams of turning vacant rubble-strewn lots into vibrant community gardens. Each year we work with hundreds of grassroots groups throughout New York City to strengthen underserved neighborhoods through community gardening. With our help, people grow food, plant flowers, educate youth, paint colorful murals and preserve their gardens as vital community centers for future generations”. Community gardens are also organised into local federations. In total, there are about 800 community gardens in New York, and the phenomenon has spread throughout the country and currently represents about 10,000 gardens. There have been two notable changes over time: municipalities have recognised the interest of community gardens and adopted public policies that often include making public land available for gardens; it is now possible to find offers for lots on the Internet and in local media. The other phenomenon associated with community gardens is gentrification (see also Lolive in this collection): the gardens more or less directly enhance the quality of life in the neighbourhoods in which they are located which leads to renewed pressure on, and increasing scarcity of urban real estate. Temporary leases which protect the land are actually quite fragile in such circumstances and non-profit groups are increasingly turning to local authorities to secure access to land over the longer term. Cases of expropriation often end up before the courts.

For more information:

Green Guerillas: <http://www.greenguerillas.org>

Harlem Community Gardeners: <http://www.harlemgardeners.org>

American Community Garden Association: <http://www.communitygarden.org>

