

VEGETABLES AND HERBS FROM THE COMMUNAL GARDEN

“We only grow first-class and, above all, healthy vegetables here.”

Marion Horn, Assistant to the Managing Director, Brückner Group

PERMACULTURE – Caring for the Earth, caring for its people – this was the guiding principle for creating a vegetable and herb garden that is tilled all year round.

NEAR-NATURAL MANAGEMENT means that no artificial fertilisers are used and that the plants are not watered either.

RAISED BEDS are built on a wooden base with dung, earth, humus, rock flour and mulch. When the wood rots, this produces heat and valuable nutrients.

THE YIELD of the permaculture garden in Marquartstein is at least as large as any industrial vegetable cultivation.



MARION HORN

Lives in: Marquartstein (Bavaria, Germany)

Joined the Brückner Group: 1997

Loves: Plants, nature and art, especially painting and singing

The people in the Bavarian community of Marquartstein looked on open-mouthed back in 2014 when a group of dedicated amateur gardeners began setting up large, circular herb and vegetable gardens with raised beds on a 4,500 m² field in the Piesenhausen district. Subscribing to the idea of permaculture, the group chose to create the garden in a form reminiscent of the image that emerges when a drop lands on the surface of water.

“I heard a presentation about the project and joined them after four months”, recalls Marion Horn. Together with twelve or so fellow gardeners, she is now in her fifth year of looking after the communal garden. “At this stage, everyone has developed their own special area. And we try to share this knowledge with one another as well. That is a key part of the idea.” Marion’s speciality is medicinal herbs. “I dry tea leaves and produce tinctures and ointments.”

In the 20 raised beds, which together measure 300 metres in length and around 50 centimetres in height, the gardeners plant traditional regional vegetables such as potatoes, beans, cucumbers, and different varieties of cabbage. However, the gardeners have also had good experience with outdoor tomatoes, aubergines and soybeans. The central element is mixed cultivation. Marion Horn: “We know which plants complement or disrupt one another and make a point of following crop rotation.” The shape of the raised bed creates additional room and a north and south side for the various vegetable types.

Marion Horn loves working in the communal garden: “Needless to say, it’s a lot of work. But it’s a great way of counterbalancing my office job and our garden has a wonderful location.” On average, she spends six hours a week working in the garden. As a reward, there are organic vegetables of the very highest quality. And the idea of a sustainable life spurs her on as well: “We only use old varieties and grow our own seeds.” And the communal gardeners are also anxious to preserve traditional knowledge about processing vegetables: “We are learning how to make sauerkraut and to pickle cucumbers again.”