



Growing in Cities

Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Urban Gardening

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Environmental design solutions to promote safety in urban gardens

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Urban gardens in certain European countries often face problems of theft and vandalism. Whereas previous research shows that a proper design and effective use of the built environment contribute to a reduction of criminal activities. Based on this data, this paper aims to investigate which strategies gardeners use to prevent theft and vandalism in their gardens, and whether the chosen allotment areas correspond to any principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) as well as which principles of CPTED can be applied in cases of urban gardens. The theory of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design has certain principles already tested in practice, showing decrease in criminal activities. In order to test the current situation in allotment gardens and to find out which design principles are most likely to be implemented in such areas, it was decided to choose eight case studies: four allotment sites in Riga and four sites in Warsaw. Focusing on allotment sites with different locations (within the residential neighbourhoods and in outskirts), the research shows the relevance of CPTED principles in different situations, making it possible to develop guidelines suitable for different cases. Literature studies, observations, evaluation of existing design solutions according to the checklist developed on the CPTED principles, and semi-structured interviews with garden facilitators were chosen as a tool to analyze the current situation in allotment gardens in Latvia and in Poland. The collected data is used for comparison of previously and currently implemented strategies to prevent crime in the garden area with those proposed by CPTED. The results of this research show that, in addition to design principles, there are various factors influencing probability of theft and vandalism, such as location within the city, "public access"/openness to public, and integration into the city's green structure.

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