

GARDENS AND AGRICULTURE IN CITIES

Keywords:

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Urbanism is a global phenomenon with considerable time-depth. In most regions of the world, people have for more than a millennium—and often for several millennia—organized their settlements in ways that we today can recognize as distinctly urban. This session will draw attention to the phenomenon of urban farming and gardening as pertinent features in long-term human history. The Chicago school of urban scholarship firmly established a modernist understanding of urbanism as an essentialist reality separate from its larger metabolistic support-system and continues to permeate not only the social sciences but also popular perceptions of the constitution of cities. However, there are emerging evidence from other schools including historical ecology, urban ecology and environmental urban history, which challenge such separation. Particularly lucid examples include not only pre-industrial cities from Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas, but also post-industrial cities, including shrinking cities, slums, and cities hit by catastrophes. Different urban histories have given rise to a remarkable spatial diversity and temporal variation viewed at the global and long-term scales that are often overlooked in urban scholarship. This session aims to investigate urban farming and gardening as pertinent features of urban social formations at different scales, including the global and long-term scales. It will take a comparative perspective to investigate the social, political, economic, and ecological contexts of gardening and farming in particular urban histories, drawing on a series of spatially and temporally distinct cases. We welcome contributions that critically examine the observed and potential role of urban farming and gardening from a range of perspectives, including self-sufficiency of food in times of crises, health, place-making, power, as well as biodiversity management. We also encourage cases studies that assess the long- and short-term values of agricultural space in cities, or that tracks the place of urban farming in metabolistic shifts and trends over the long-term in urban energy regimes. We aim for a broad coverage of empirical cases and invite historians, ecologists, archaeologists, geographers, anthropologists, psychologists as well as other scholars to participate in the session and submit a paper proposal.