

## **EXPLORATION 2: PART 1 – URBAN GARDENS & OPEN SPACE MANAGEMENT**

### **Overview**

Food doesn't grow in the supermarket. Both fresh and processed foods require transportation from farm to processing plant to consumer. Locally sourcing food reduces some transportation impact on the environment.

### **Main Problem**

Urban development may negatively impact food security and biodiversity.

### **Guiding Questions**

1. How does urban gardening support sustainability?

Explore urban gardening in Berlin as one action to improve sustainability.

2. How does urban development impact biodiversity?

Explore how Berlin is balancing the human need for housing with the needs of pollinator species for habitat.

### **Prinzessinnengarten**

Arriving back at the apartment building simultaneously with Anna and Mr. Graf, you help carry groceries upstairs while Luca secures the bikes in the courtyard storage shed.

“Are you hungry?” Mrs. Graf asks, looking at Anna.

Anna nods her head, “Starving!”

“Okay. Go wash up. We will go to [Prinzessinnengarten](#) for lunch,” Mr. Graf says with a laugh.

The ride from *Schönleinstraße* to *Hermannstraße* is about 10 minutes. “The [Prinzessinnengarten](#) is in a historic location,” Mrs. Graf explains as you exit the station. “The garden moved from [Moritzplatz](#) in [Kreuzberg](#) to its current location in [Neukölln](#) in 2019. The garden is built on the old *St. Jacobis* cemetery. By using this space, the collective behind *Prinzessinnengarten* is preserving a historic green space in the heart of Berlin, and also developing it into a space where the public can experience nature. I think the new location is great!”

Exiting the station, you walk a short distance north along [Hermannstraße](#), then enter the *Prinzessinnengarten* and follow the family to the garden cafe. The menu varies depending on what is in season in the garden or who is cooking in the cafe. Today, the menu features a fresh tomato and basil sauce over pasta, roasted carrots, mozzarella, lentils, as well as a big green salad. The tomatoes, basil, carrots, red beets, and greens are all grown in the garden. Today’s cafe chef makes pasta and cheeses using locally sourced ingredients from farms near Berlin. Lunch is served in ceramic bowls with metal forks. The dishes will be returned to the cafe where they will be washed and reused, eliminating waste from disposable plates and plastic forks. Bottled drinks are available with a *Pfand*. Coffee, tea, and beer are also available for purchase.

Looking around, you notice honeybee hives. You ask, “Why are honeybee hives in the middle of the city?”

Mrs. Graf answers, “The bees are important pollinators for the garden. The beekeeper also harvests and sells the honey. Each bloom season has a distinct taste that makes the honey special. There are even honey flavors that depend on trees pollinated by bees. For example, linden honey is made by bees that pollinate linden trees.” Mrs. Graf continues, “There are many rooftop beehives in Berlin. In Kreuzberg, one building has eight hives on the rooftop because in 2011, Erika Mayr, a well-known urban beekeeper in Berlin, became passionate about bringing back bee populations. Now Berlin is one of the world cities addressing the global loss of honeybees” (Stadt Bienenhonig).

“We have a garden and hive at my school,” Luca adds. “We learned that bees have more food source varieties in the city than in the country because most large-scale farms specialize in a single plant type. Blueberry honey is my favorite.”

“Is everyone finished eating?” Mr. Graf asks, looking around at the empty bowls. “We’ll clean up and see what we can do to help today.”

Carrying hand tools, you follow the family to the raised planters that look like milk crates. You carefully weed around the tomato plants. Anna picks ripe, red tomatoes, filling a flat wooden case with one layer, while Luca picks cucumbers.

Before leaving the garden, Mrs. Graf purchases honey, mozzarella cheese, potato salad, and tomatoes. “I think the tomatoes and cheese will taste good with basil from our balcony garden. Our tomatoes aren’t ripe yet.”

Just as she had done at *Original Unverpackt*, Mrs. Graf has her own containers and reusable cloth bags. Money from the garden store and cafe supports the garden.

**Explore**

Watch the [Prinzessinnengarten video](#) by the *Transatlantic Outreach Program*. Use Google Earth to find and explore the *Prinzessinnengarten*. Drag the street view icon to any of the blue 360° view spheres to visit the garden. Explore other locations mentioned in the reading.

**Discussion**

Describe what you see in the garden.

What questions do you have?