

# KLEINER GARTEN FÜR DIE KINDER

## SMALL GARDEN FOR THE CHILDREN

Flowers bloom in three planters in front of the house. Close by is a bench for children to sit on. It offers a view of a small flower meadow with a cherry tree in the middle.

The colorful and child-friendly planting delights passersby and creates a habitat for insects as the seasons change. The fruits of the plants also attract birds. Withering in the fall is part of the natural cycle of life. In winter, the view is barren and the garden reveals its simple beauty.

The garden is tended and cared for with care. It reminds us, in both obvious and subtle ways, how important it is never to forget the suffering endured by the victims during the Nazi era — whether at the hands of the perpetrators or the followers who were tolerated at the University of Leipzig. During this dark period, people were forcibly sterilized and children and adolescents with marked behaviour, mental or physical disabilities were killed.

The people using the house pay attention to the needs of the garden and lovingly take care of it, perhaps even together with the children of a neighboring kindergarten.

### *Creating a garden*

The hands come into contact with the soil, dig into the earth when planting the bulbs or move rhythmically when spreading the seeds. Nature has its demands. Not every bulb, not every seed will grow. Flowering is followed by withering. The hands remove what has dried up – does the plant like it? The garden surprises the people who work in it time and again with its interplay of give and take. The blossoming, delicately fragrant branches of the cherry tree foreshadow the sweet red fruit.

A garden enables all those who tend it to make contact with themselves through their senses. The flourishing of the plants also delights those who look at the garden. It indicates awakening and renewal – in the cycle of the seasons in which we humans are involved.

### *Tending the small garden for the children*

The planting should be suitable for children. What would the children and young people whom the garden commemorates have loved? What would they have planted and what do the little ones from the kindergarten in the neighborhood say about it?

In order to offer bees and insects an island in the sealed area of the campus, plants rich in nectar and pollen are needed.

*Liveliness* should be the expression of the garden. Colorful and species-rich, green from spring onwards. Beautiful-looking dried plant parts can adorn the garden until late fall. In winter, it is the sparseness that gives the garden its character.

Plants of the kinds that are grown far too often, in large beds, should be avoided. These are often plants that look monotonous and hardly need any care. It is also important to ensure that there are no similarities to stone and gravel gardens or grave plantings.

On April 8, 2020, the establishment of the memorial site was approved by the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Education. Leipzig based artist Andreas Wendt designed the garden and handed it over to the Faculty of Education at Leipzig University for maintenance – together with the text published here.

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