

POST-CRISIS ADAPTIVE URBANISM. URBAN GARDENS

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Urban gardens are gaining increasing interest in recent times as a form of citizen occupation in different areas of the city and this was reported by [La Vanguardia](#) and [El País](#) a few weeks ago in two articles to thank the [general disinterest](#) of the traditional media in Spain for urban issues. The fact that these things reach the traditional mass media is normally the thermometer that I use to know if the thing has crossed the borders of the specialized media, because sometimes, from being so much in your readings, you end up losing a little sense of reality. The existence of urban gardens is **not a novelty**; the edges of the urban fabric, and not only them, have always welcomed forms of land cultivation halfway between **subsistence, resistance against the advance of urbanization** and the survival of **traditional ways of life** in the countryside. In this sense, let's say that these are **spontaneous formulas**. On the other hand, what I think is gaining strength are other more current forms (and for this reason they are relevant) linked to the **active appropriation** of public space, the creative and community reuse of disused spaces and plots, and, to a lesser extent, the generation of consumption alternatives.



This is a practice that has initially been understood as **marginal** or actively contested (as in the case of the expressions of [guerrilla gardening](#)) and, therefore, off the agenda. However, it now has a **favorable context**. As I have commented on other occasions, this is for me one of the great hypotheses of the **new urban agenda that emerged after the crisis**: the acceptance by local institutions of practices and proposals that over the years of debauchery carried out by iconic projects were discarded as marginal and that, however, in the face of the new reality of enormous financial difficulties of local governments, gain weight as cheap and effective proposals. When it comes to reviewing experiences, I will go far away, as almost always. **San Francisco** (California), for example, has just passed a [municipal ordinance](#) that establishes the general authorization for agricultural uses of any land in the city that wants to be used to create urban gardens, thus facilitating a social practice of the soil. It is an example of an adaptive urbanism regulation that, with an approach focused on the recovery of the underused capacities of all the city's resources, shapes new ways to facilitate the urgent process of urban reconversion. In this video we can see the experience in **Berlin**, and it explains the level of extension they have reached

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=h9wC2hosuzE

And in this other one, how rooftops are being used in **New York** to open urban gardens, an alternative to use the entire surface of rooftops that exist in a city and that is highly underutilized for uses other than agricultural, but also for housing, endowments or as recreational spaces (a good one [experience in Warsaw](#)):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=t3mLPy0ttqc

Paris also has an action model through the [Charte Main Green](#), urban gardens are proposed as a mass solution for **Detroit** and in [Spain](#) there are initiatives of different kinds. You can find a very complete comparative article about different experiences and also an analysis about the origin and role of urban gardens in ecological urban rehabilitation at [Urban gardens in three European cities: London, Berlin, Madrid](#) (I found this map of