



# European Award for Ecological Gardening 2025

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Conditions for participation

Version of 31/10/2024

## I. Responsibility for the content of the Award and submission office

The initiative Natur im Garten, represented by the Federal Province of Lower Austria as well as the “European Garden Association - Natur im Garten International”, the „Natur im Garten“ GmbH and the “Natur im Garten” Service GmbH will award the “European Award for Ecological Gardening 2025“ as a recognition of outstanding achievements in the field of ecological gardening. The Award, for which participants from all over Europe are eligible, will be handed over by an international expert jury.

### Competition Management

“Natur im Garten” GmbH  
A-3430 Tulln, Am Wasserpark 1, Austria  
[award@naturimgarten.at](mailto:award@naturimgarten.at)  
<http://www.naturimgarten.at/award>  
<http://www.naturimgarten.at/award-english>

## II. Subject of the Award

It is the objective of the European Award for Ecological Gardening 2025 to award prizes to outstanding, high-quality projects and achievements, which have already been implemented and are based on ecological gardening. We are looking for both innovative and sustainable projects of exemplary character, which are near-naturally designed, ecologically cultivated and can also include social and economic aspects.

## III. Objective of the Award and assessment criteria

Submissions can be made in the following three categories:

- **Category 1: Gardening focused on community**  
Joint commitment strengthens society. Selfless people are often happier and more successful than egoists. Economists also confirm that a willingness to help pays off in the long term. Is "one for all, all for one" also the motto of your project?  
Whether gardens at kindergartens or schools, or green spaces in communal housing projects, whether intergenerational or intercultural gardening or the "neighbourhood oasis" around the corner: we bring innovative, ecological gardens to the fore that focus on communal and social aspects with a model character. Regardless of their size, they can be used in a variety of ways by young and old alike and integrate the region or the surrounding area. Environmental justice and climate protection-related aspects should also be reflected in the projects submitted.
- **Category 2: Biodiversity and climate change adaptation in gardens and green spaces**  
Biodiversity means diversity - a variety of different habitats and a wealth of species of animals, plants, fungi and microorganisms. Nature and species protection starts right at our doorstep. Climate change is constantly posing new challenges to us. We therefore need intelligent ways to adapt gardens and green spaces. In this category,

projects ranging from renaturalised industrial estates, city parks, school gardens and public green spaces to open spaces at company or residential buildings and private gardens can be submitted.

We are interested in seeing a lively mix of implemented submissions that promote biodiversity, demonstrate adaptation to climate change and inspire imitation - through inventiveness, new solution approaches or innovations. They should also have the potential to initiate new projects. Diverse structures in near-natural design, the careful use of soil and environment through ecological care are decisive for this category. The innovative use of plants that are suited to the respective location is just as much a focus as rainwater management, the positive influence on the microclimate and climate-friendly gardening.

- **Category 3: Trends for the future: New knowledge - new diversity**

Have you developed services, business models or technologies for the green sector - whether analogue or digital? Are you exploring new, unconventional paths with this innovation? Does your idea follow the principle of a closed cycle? Or do your products and services make a targeted contribution to protecting the environment, promoting social justice and creating economic value? Also, the pioneering use of artificial intelligence falls under this category. Has the realisation of your innovation been largely completed, and do you already have some initial experience of its impact? The European Award for Ecological Gardening 2025 will honour products, processes and services which sustainably improve ecological gardening through innovation and progress. This is because innovations have always brought about positive changes that influence and enrich the lives of all kinds of target groups. Make use of the European Award for Ecological Gardening 2025 as a platform to show where inventiveness can take us.

The objective of the Award is reflected in the assessment criteria and is intended to present excellent ideas, achievements and results in one or several aspects:

- respect for nature and biodiversity, resource conservation
- optimisation of ecological processes and methods in garden management
- the most optimal ecological care and plant selection in accordance with the respective location
- raising public awareness for ecological gardening
- sustainable contribution to climate change
- imitation character, transferability, charisma
- creativity, innovation and sustainability of the implemented ideas and solutions
- social aspects with model character
- added value for the quality of life
- creatively designed landscape spaces
- cooperation and involvement of stakeholders

The size and financial scope of the projects are no assessment criteria. The focus is on the wealth of ideas and charisma.

The following additional requirements apply to Category 3:

- The Jury's assessment will focus on the product, business model, technology or service as well as the impact of the innovation on the market, environment and society. For example, the degree of innovative character, originality or sophistication of the solution are included in the assessment.

The criteria applied are therefore the following:

- the creativity of the solution
  - the degree of technology of the solution
  - the benefits for the user
  - the market opportunities of the solution
  - ecological and societal effects
- The realisation of the innovation should be largely completed, at least some initial experience of the effects of the innovation should already be available. Mere ideas, inventions, patents or prototypes without market realisation will not be accepted.

## IV. Eligibility to participate

**The competition is open to anyone.** The competition particularly targets gardeners, planning offices, municipalities and local communities, educational institutions, research institutes, initiatives and associations from all European nations. The competition does not honour individuals but projects. Participation in the European Award for Ecological Gardening 2025 is free of charge.

Projects can be submitted which have been finalised during the past five years. Submitters are free to make their submissions in as many categories as they wish, provided that all criteria are met. However, the same project can be submitted in one category only. Should a submission be conceivable in all three categories, the submitter(s) select(s) those they consider to be the focus of the given project. The Jury reserves the right to shift submissions to a different category where appropriate. The Jury reserves the right to assign, if deemed appropriate, submissions to another category as long as it deems them worthy of an award in the respective category. The number of submissions per participant is not limited.

The competition is not open to:

- employees and relatives of members of the Awarding Authority and organisers, as well as
- projects which have already been awarded with the European Award for Ecological Gardening during the previous 4 years.

## V. Competition language

English

In addition, the description of the project can also be enclosed in German.

## VI. Documents to be submitted

Submissions can only be made **online at [www.naturimgarten.at/award-english](http://www.naturimgarten.at/award-english) starting from 15 November 2024 until 31 May 2025**. Participants undertake to answer all questions truthfully. For each application, appropriate documentation must be provided that provides evidence of the special ecological, sustainable and social significance of the project by means of plans, photographs, descriptions, etc. By means of the uploaded documents, applicants have the opportunity to describe their submitted work and thereby give the Jury an impression of their project. A submission consists of the following:

### 1. Application for project submission (form)

For all categories, the online submission form must be completed in the desired category. Unfortunately, competition entries without a fully completed submission form cannot be considered.

### 2. Illustrations and photographs

An important part of the application documents is informative photographic material. 6 to 12 illustrations and photographs, which (in terms of assessment) are of significance for the project, indicating the project name and referring to the idea, location and social aspects; details should be given only if they are of relevance for the application. Use the following formats: A4 as JPG or TIF, resolution: 300 dpi (printable), max. 5 MB per picture. Include statements of copyright / photographic rights and an indication of the photographers' names. The pictures must represent the current status of the project and should not be older than 2 years at most.

If the submitted project is nominated, these photographs will be published in connection with the European Award for Ecological Gardening 2025 and for reporting in publications, on the website as well as in the online media of "Natur im Garten".

In all categories, additional documentation can be uploaded for further project documentation or to better highlight the impact of the project:

- short films and videos (PC-readable formats only, 3-5 minutes each). These can be sent as a link to a cloud storage (e.g. Dropbox, Wetransfer, Google Drive).
- additional visual material such as plans, graphics, sketches, drawings, views, plant lists, etc.
- Further documentation (press-clippings, brochures, etc.)

### 3. Receipt of documents

Each submitter is, both technically and content-wise, responsible for his or her submission.

All the application documents must be submitted at the latest by **31 May 2025 23:59 hrs** digitally via online form (including the author's name, total data volume: max. 60 MB). Participation is only possible within the participation period. All submissions received after the end of the participation period will no longer be considered for evaluation.

Each submission must be complete and meet the specified criteria. Submissions that are delayed, incomplete or do not meet the conditions of participation will be excluded from the

competition. All materials requested by the competition consortium must be submitted to the awarding authority in good time prior to the meeting of the Jury members.

The Awarding Authority reserves the right to request additional documentation subsequently in order to provide evidence of facts or to question third parties about the projects submitted. The latter findings can be taken into consideration during the assessment.

## VII. Jury and assessment procedure

The European Award for Ecological Gardening 2025 will be awarded on the basis of an application. The award will be decided upon by an independent and expert panel.

This is a one-stage submission competition with no participation fee. The project submitted will be judged exclusively on the basis of the documents submitted. The latter must present the project in a comprehensible and clear manner.

The composition of the jury is incumbent on the Awarding Authority. All jury members have many years of experience in their field and are renowned and well-known personalities in the international horticultural industry. The jury is independent of the participants and makes a free decision. Submitters are excluded from acting as members of the Jury.

After the submission deadline, all submitted projects will be viewed and subjected to a comprehensive assessment. In each category, the ten most highly rated submissions will be selected from the submitted projects during a judging procedure using a points system. The number of nominees per category can be changed by the Jury. A winning project in the respective category will be selected from the nominated projects at the expert jury meeting.

In addition, the jury may give non-endowed awards/special mentions to other noteworthy objects, which will be honoured with a certificate.

The jury sessions are non-public and will take place in June and July 2025. The awarding consortium will supervise the expert judging procedure and ensure that the winners are correctly selected. Each jury member has one vote. Decisions will be taken by a simple majority of the votes. The decisions of the Jury are final and are not countervailable. Any recourse to courts of law is excluded. No written correspondence can be conducted about the Jury's work.

If, upon evaluation of the dossiers by the Jury, it appears that the submitter was not eligible for participation, or if there is any reason for exclusion, the next submission in the sequence will advance.

## VIII. Nominations and prize

The Jury will nominate the best submissions in each category and select the winning project from among the latter. Participants to the competition nominated for the prize will be informed in writing and announced on 15 August 2025 on the website of "Natur im Garten", as well as in social networks and other online and print media.

The award winner will be presented to the public only during the prize award ceremony. The awarding of the nomination for the prize-winning projects takes place by means of a certificate and a nomination board.

For each category, a prize will be awarded to the winning project. The prize is made up of the public prize award ceremony, a special plaque, as well as a prize money of EUR 1.000,00. The prize money goes to the submitting institution.

All projects nominated or awarded for the European Award for Ecological Gardening 2025 can be advertised with the slogan "Nominated for the European Award for Ecological Gardening 2025" or "Recognition at the European Award for Ecological Gardening 2025" or "Prize winner of the European Award for Ecological Gardening 2025" and use the logo of the European Award for Ecological Gardening 2025 for this purpose.

Participation in the competition and the prize award ceremony is free of charge. Beyond that, no costs incurred can be reimbursed.

## IX. Presentation of the nominated projects

Following the announcement of the nominations, all nominated projects will be presented at [www.naturimgarten.at/award](http://www.naturimgarten.at/award) or [www.naturimgarten.at/award-english](http://www.naturimgarten.at/award-english).

A detailed brochure with all nominated projects will be published during the award ceremony. In addition, all nominated projects will be introduced and presented to the public in the form of an exhibition where the project submitters will have the opportunity to present their projects personally. The presence of the submitters at the award ceremony is requested. Please register in good time at [www.naturimgarten.at/award](http://www.naturimgarten.at/award).

This will be accompanied by a press release and the nominees and winning projects will be published on the website [www.naturimgarten.at](http://www.naturimgarten.at). The winners and their competition entries will be published in particular on the "Natur im Garten" website as well as in social networks and in other online and print media.

## X. Online public voting

In a public online audience voting, the project receiving most of the votes from the nominated projects in each category will be selected as the audience award winner. The public voting will take place following the publication of the nomination by the Jury. All nominated projects will automatically take part in the online public voting. The online public voting will take place from 16 August 2025, 12:00 noon, to 16 October 2025, 12:00 noon.

Each project in each category receiving most of the votes from the audience will receive an audience award. The prize is made up of the public award ceremony as well as a certificate and a special plaque. The audience award winners will be presented to the public at the award ceremony on 7 November 2025. The winning projects of the audience award are authorised to advertise with the slogan "Audience Award Winner of the European Awards for

Ecological Gardening 2025" and to use the logo of the European Awards for Ecological Gardening 2025 for this purpose.

Participation in the online public voting is only possible by providing an e-mail address. After voting, the voter will receive an e-mail with a confirmation link. By clicking on the link, the voter confirms his/her participation. Only then will the vote be counted for the voting. The competition organisers will only count votes cast online via the competition website (<https://www.naturimgarten.at/award> or <https://www.naturimgarten.at/award-english> ).

The voter can vote for any number of projects, but only once for each nominated entry. Votes cast via other channels, such as likes on social media, are not permitted for voting. These votes will not be counted.

## **XI. Prize award ceremony**

Prizes and certificates will be handed over solely to the submitter(s) of the competition contributions which receive an award. The prize award ceremony, during which the winning projects will be announced, will be held in November 2025 in Lower Austria.

## **XII. Schedule and important dates**

<b>15 November 2024:</b>	Start of the submission period
<b>31 May 2025</b>	Entries deadline
<b>June/July 2025:</b>	Jury sessions
<b>15 August 2025:</b>	Announcement of the nominations on the website of "Natur im Garten" as well as in social networks
<b>16 August 2025 to 16 October 2025:</b>	Online public voting
<b>November 2025:</b>	Prize award ceremony and announcement of the winning projects

## **XIII. Awarding Authority**

**Federal Province of Lower Austria**  
RU3 - Gruppe Raumordnung, Umwelt und Verkehr  
Abteilung Umwelt- und Energiewirtschaft  
A-3109 St. Pölten, Landhausplatz 1, Österreich  
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#### **„Natur im Garten“ Service GmbH**

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#### **European Garden Association - Natur im Garten International**

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[www.naturimgarten.at/european-garden-association](http://www.naturimgarten.at/european-garden-association)

### **XIV. Changes to the terms and conditions of participation**

The conditions of participation are subject to change. The Awarding Consortium reserves the right to update and amend these conditions of participation at any time without notifying the participants separately. The applicable wording of the conditions of participation can be viewed on the competition website (<https://www.naturimgarten.at/award> or <https://www.naturimgarten.at/award-english>).

### **XV. Exceptional cancellation of the competition**

The Awarding Consortium expressly reserves the right to cancel the competition without prior notice and without giving reasons. This applies in particular to any reasons that disrupt or prevent the competition from running as planned, or if it is not possible to hold the competition properly for technical reasons.

### **XVI. Contact**

All dates and information on the European Award for Ecological Gardening 2025 can also be found online at <https://www.naturimgarten.at/award> and <https://www.naturimgarten.at/award-english>. Questions regarding the submission can be addressed to the Awarding Consortium at [award@naturimgarten.at](mailto:award@naturimgarten.at). The competition is subject exclusively to the laws of the Federal Republic of Austria.

## **XVII. Declaration of consent**

By participating in the European Award for Ecological Gardening 2025

- the submitters confirm that they are authorised to submit the project / product / service / process / technology for the "European Award for Ecological Gardening 2025".
- the submitters assure that they are authorised to dispose of the exploitation rights and copyrights to the materials submitted in connection with the submission (such as, in particular, uploaded photographs, videos and other image material) and the consent of the persons appearing in these images.
- the submitters agree to the publication of the submitted competition contributions in exhibitions and in the media (presentations, web, print and radio) as well as for other publications without any spatial or temporal restrictions, indicating the names of the submitters, photographers and the location.

The submitted documents remain with the Awarding Consortium and will not be returned.

By submitting their competition entry, all competition participants accept all the conditions contained in the call for entries. Participants expressly acknowledge that the decisions of the Jury are final and incontestable in all technical and discretionary matters. Legal recourse is excluded.

All participant data will be treated confidentially and only used in accordance with the data protection regulations applicable in Austria as well as the GDPR. Further information can be found in our privacy policy.

**We wish you good luck and a lot of success with your participation!**