

# SoLawi Greene (CSA)

## basic concept

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## our goal

We aim for a collective self-sufficient cultivation of fruits, vegetables and herbs.

Therefore it is necessary to base the production on the actual needs of our members and to live and work together, so we can build a nurturing and healthy alternative to capitalism.

## schedule

We start in 2020 with finding an incredible gardening team, shovelling compost and experimenting with different cultivation techniques.

The actual supply of fruits and vegetables is going to start in 2021. The financial concept and bidding round for 2021 is going to take place in autumn 2020.

## horticultural milestones

This is a big subject with a lot to say. Instead of examining everything from start to finish, we want to offer thesis to what we can create and exchange ideas about it.

### 1). Storing CO<sub>2</sub> – creating soil

Increasing organic matter in/of the soil, which leads to more fertility, water storage capacity and stopping climate change

## **2). Child friendly**

In all dimensions: aesthetic, economic and environmental.

We want to create a place where children, teens and adults are welcome to explore, learn and enjoy.

## **3). Celebrating life**

From people to bees to clover, we want everyone and everything to explore and live their individual gifts and talents.

## **4). Our equity is not material**

Our strength lies not in tools, infrastructure and land, but in organisation, information and relationships.

## **5). Inspire improvement**

Time consuming bureaucracy stiffens and prevents change. We want flexible structure which makes adjustments easy.

## **6). Expand Common Land**

"If everyone would do it like this, that would be... good"

We want to farm in a way that benefits everyone. For example, increase water retention capacities on our land, being neighbour-friendly and create relationships.

We want to build on trust instead of contracts.

## **7). Easy to get in and out**

Investments in expensive infrastructure that has to be paid off hinder entering and makes dropping out more difficult. We want more people to farm, that's why we avoid these barriers.

## **8). Holistic**

We see the world as a whole. The *SoLawi Greene* wants to find ways to be spiritually healthy, ethically correct, economically profitable and ecologically strengthening.

For example: We want a species-diverse agriculture. The synergies between the plants in mixed cultures are productive, build habitats for wildlife and are places of spiritual strength.

We want to be guided by hope and not be driven by fear.

## **9). Social Sustainable**

One question we always ask: Does it work for both the privileged and the disadvantaged?

## **10). Scalability**

If it can only be done on a small scale, we probably can't feed the world with it. If it can only be done on a large scale, it's exclusionary. If it's scalable, the revenue potential will be there regardless of the size.

### 11). **Interweaving instead of Separation**

- animals and plants in symbiosis
- there is no waste
- make better use of existing things
- use different zones for microclimate effects
- design local cycles

### 12). **Fertile Seed**

It is not about the most beautiful colour, the best taste, the highest leaf mass or yield, but about locally adapted viable plants.

### 13). **Nature is based on Perennial Plants**

Annual plants have their place, but nature is moving towards perennials, so we do that too.

### 14). **Nature grows from the inside out**

We also want to search for the truth within ourselves instead of being told from external sources what is right.

### 15). **Little Queendoms/Kingdoms**

To be able to take responsibility we need space for development. We give this to each other.

## **Cultivation Plan**

The cultivation plan can be found in the *cultivation concept* on our website.

## **Structure**

### **Community**

We want to be **self-determined** without a boss and pressure to perform. We try to achieve this by setting out areas of work and distributing decision-making competencies with the question, in which area do you see learning opportunities for yourself and where is your passion? **Be aware:** This does not mean that we do less. We see the opportunity to provide ourselves and others with healthy food as an opportunity to create a good life for all, and this for we get up early and work to achieve our goal.

We want to interweave horticulture with **inner and outer change** for a better world. For us, resistance and pausing are as much a part of everyday life as harvesting and sowing. In order to have capacities for this the work processes in the garden and office needs to be **efficient** and **solution-oriented**.

**Drug-free** - not as a dogma, but because parts of us don't feel comfortable around drugs. We will not consume alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs together, i.e. there will be no beer at the assemblies or around the campfire, and no smoking in the fields and gardens.

Even off the field there is a lot to do to make the *SoLawi Greene* as fantastic as we want it to be. How we organize ourselves on the field is described in the "Cultivation Concept 2021". Areas off the field are the following.

- 1) structure and inner communication
- 2) public relation, cooperation and network
- 3) accounting and legal
- 4) founding applications and donations
- 5) member support
- 6) volunteer support
- 7) janitor (building and taking care of info structure)
- 8) awareness and empowerment (create a freed society)

Horticulturists, volunteers and members can be part of one or several areas.

The *SoLawi Greene* is parted into three groups who have different responsibility.

Horticulturists horticulture and keep an overview over planing, cultivate and coordinate to-do's.

Volunteers choose an area of their interest and help when they want to.

Members help on the field (when they want to), process and eat the produce, take part in the bidding round, participate with knowledge, material and finance at one's own discretion and need.

This distinction is an attempt to show the varying degrees of temporal involvement.

For horticulturists, the *SoLawi Greene* is at the centre of their everyday life as their main occupation and they bear most responsibility; they can be trained gardeners, career changers or trainees.

Helpers have a different focus in their lives, but take on tasks and responsibilities. Members mainly get their food and may be involved in work assignments and take on responsibilities in their areas of expertise, perhaps as photographer, food driver, herb witch etc.

## The Land

We create mobile infrastructure and therefore do not need to own land. We rent several gardens and 1.3 hectares of field long term, which will be the centre of our *SoLawi*. We have the explicit agreement to plant trees and bushes and to build foil tunnels.

## Decision making

The *SoLawi Greene* emerged from the collective *living utopia* (more on: [gelebteutopie.de](http://gelebteutopie.de)), as an independent project. Niklas Grade rents the field and works towards the realisation of *SoLawi*. Because we unexpectedly got the great opportunity to rent the field the land is ahead of schedule. There is no organisation group and no legal form yet. The goal now is to find a legal form that will relieve Niklas of the responsibility to rent the field and to organise ourselves without formal hierarchy.

The aim is to combine freedom of development with commitment. While the team is slowly growing, decision forms will be found that fit well with the people who are involved. The work areas manage themselves as far as possible. Strategic decisions are made at closed meeting and decisions affecting several areas are made at irregular meetings.

In addition, everyone is competent and invited:

- to advertise and carry the idea into the world
- to do things that are good for the *SoLawi Greene*
- to bring food to the distribution station and take it from there
- to organize seminars, workshops, film evenings, excursions, conferences
- ...

## Dates

15.-17.5.2020	first gathering, team building
3.-5-7.2020	second gathering, team building
21.-25.9.2020	yearly annual meeting
24.10.2020 10 am	general meeting, presentation of the cultivation concept and biting round, discussing results of the general meetings

## Legal

The legal form has not been decided yet. It depends on the team that comes together.

## **Financial concept**

We are aiming to spend as little as possible, so we don't depend on big earnings.

- We invest in knowledge and empowerment, thanks to great people who are happy to pass on their skills.
- We organize our daily lives collectively and solidarity, sharing houses, tools, food etc.

The remaining need for money and materials is met by the bidding rounds, in which it is made transparent what is needed and everyone gives what they like and are able to. In addition, there is the possibility to apply for funding from foundations, etc., which have good chance of getting approved.

## **FAQ**

(for the current version visit [gelepteutopie.de/solawi](http://gelepteutopie.de/solawi))

### **Can only people from Greene be part of the *SoLawi*?**

No, we are also happy for people from the surrounding area to join in. With the *SoLawi* in Greene we want to contribute to a regenerative Leinetal in which people and projects are locally, regionally and nationally networked and support each other.

### **How is the *SoLawi Greene* financed? What is a bidding round?**

Solidarity-based agriculture is a form of economy in which farmers\* and buyers\* cooperate. Before each garden year, we calculate the budget for the next year and present it at the Annual General Meeting. This budget includes e.g. salaries, seeds, rent, material, equipment, costs for transport and networking etc. In the bidding round all members try to cover the budget together. The members determine their own contribution depending on their financial possibilities. The aim is to balance higher and lower contributions. Participation in the bidding round is obligatory for membership. However, anyone can also be represented.

### **How much is a membership in *SoLawi*?**

Your membership fee is determined by yourself in the bidding round (see above). The amount of money required varies from year to year due to investments and changing current expenses. Before the General Assembly and the bidding round in autumn, the horticulturists will publish the financial plan for the next year, where we can see also where costs can be saved through your network or resources. As described above, however, each participant should be able to make a contribution that is affordable for them.

### **How long does a membership last?**

A membership is for one year, from 1st November to 31st October. This commitment corresponds to our idea of solidarity participation. In Autumn 2021 we will see who wants to continue to participate and if we can accept new members.

### **Is there a trial membership?**

In our opinion, this contradicts the idea, where horticulturists and buyers give a binding assurance that they will finance or share the vegetables for one year. In order to be able to operate safely, the horticulturists must be able to count on a secure budget. However, it is possible to take over individual shares temporarily, for example when members go on holiday.

### **What if I want to/must drop out earlier?**

Then you should independently find a new member for the rest of the business year. We keep a waiting list and can help you with that.

### **How big is a harvest share?**

Everything we harvest we distribute.

Since we cannot estimate our first harvest in 2021 at all, we promise you only this: we try to contribute a substantial part to your nutrition.

The amount and type of vegetables depends very much on the season. Also harvest failures of single cultures due to weather conditions or other imponderables are possible. It is certain that the eating habits have to adapt to the supply of our seasonally available vegetables. At certain times there are naturally a lot of leafy vegetables, at other times a lot of root and storage vegetables.

Stockpiling is becoming more popular again. In addition, the effect of a seasonal supply should not be underestimated, as it makes people look forward all the more to tomatoes in summer and lamb's lettuce in winter.

On the consumer side, the needs of the members will also be very different; individual eating habits and access to additional food (containers, food sharing, cultivation in one's own or community garden, collecting wild plants, etc.) could become more important.

### **What is the difference to a subscription box?**

The CSA principle is fundamentally different from the idea of a vegetable subscription. Behind a CSA is the ideal of a solidarity community, in which the members support "their" farm economically, while the farm provides them with food. A subscription box, on the other hand, is rather a service that sells vegetables in boxes to its customers. Our focus is on relationship, rather than service.

### **Do the vegetables all come from your own field?**

Yes and no. Our focus is on growing fruit and vegetables. But we also see the *SoLaWi Greene* as a platform for joint organisation. We invite you to take advantage of the community. We could gather potatoes, apples for making juice, mushrooms, drying herbs, making sauerkraut, preserving tomatoes etc.

In addition, joint bulk orders or cooperation with other farms in order to expand our range is also possible. (For example oil, seeds, grain)

### **Are the vegetables all organic?**

Yes and no. We're organic, but we're not certified. Instead of state inspection bodies, the members themselves carry out the quality inspection by establishing a relationship and being able to see and taste the conditions of cultivation themselves.

**Do you also have animals?**

We believe that animals belong to a complete ecosystem, which we are striving for. So far we included a dog and a colony of bees. We're thinking about chickens. In addition want to offer wild animals many opportunities to feed and settle.

**Do you produce or use animal products and fertilizers?**

We use stable manure from horses in the neighbourhood as animal manure for soil fertility and humus building. We will not use other animal products, such as horn shavings, bone or blood meal, which are waste products of intensive livestock farming.

**Will there be fruits?**

Yes, we want to focus more on perennial plants. We will plant a wild fruit hedge and fruit trees. We are already harvesting fruits in gardens around the neighbourhood, whose owners are happy if it gets eaten.

**Where do I get the food?**

We are going to set up a pick-up station in the old nursery. The room will be locked with a combination lock and you get the code.

**How are the vegetables distributed among the members?**

We do not pack boxes for the members. The distribution is organized by the members among themselves. It is up to you whether you divide the vegetables exactly according to the shares or whether you proceed according to the principle "everyone takes what he/she needs". There will be room to discuss the organization when it is time.

**Is assistance in the field obligatory?**

There is no obligation to assist. However, we welcome and encourage a close relationship between our members and the horticulture and we wish for your active involvement. In addition, there are larger activities which cannot function without the participation of the members (e.g. potato harvest and preserving food).

**Where else can I participate?**

Apart from the promise to make your financial contribution for one year and to participate in the general meeting and bidding round at the beginning of the garden year, we have no fixed expectations. The principle of CSA is based on the fact that many hands can organise and distributing vegetables – which is normally done by wholesalers and retailers. In this respect, commitment is required in the management of the horticulture, communication, advertising for new members and supporters, bookkeeping, legal matters, the organisation of joint campaigns, etc. What are you particularly good at? What do you enjoy doing?

### **Who inspired the concept?**

Unfortunately we are mainly influenced by negative developments in the world. We see the need to do everything different. We don't want to give these circumstances another stage. Instead, we want to make transparent how different people and groups are who have influenced us positively, and that we dare to start the first *SoLawi* in Greene is due in part to the preliminary work of:

Solawi Netzwerk <https://www.solidarische-landwirtschaft.org/das-konzept/>

Friederike Habermann <https://www.ulrike-helmer-verlag.de/buchbeschreibungen/friederike-habermann-ecommony/>

Jörg Bergstedt <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ub5dlYJywP8>

Tobi Rosswog <http://after-work-buch.de/>

Joel Salatin <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R2it1-Sbhjg>

Bienewerder Hofkollektiv <https://hofbienenwerder.org/>

Herbsttagung der Freien Ausbildung <http://herbsttagung.org/>

### **How do I become a member?**

Just send us an Email!

To register click here: <https://solawigreene.typeform.com/to/iR30U>