

# NORRBYVÄLLE

AN AGRI-URBAN CASE STUDY

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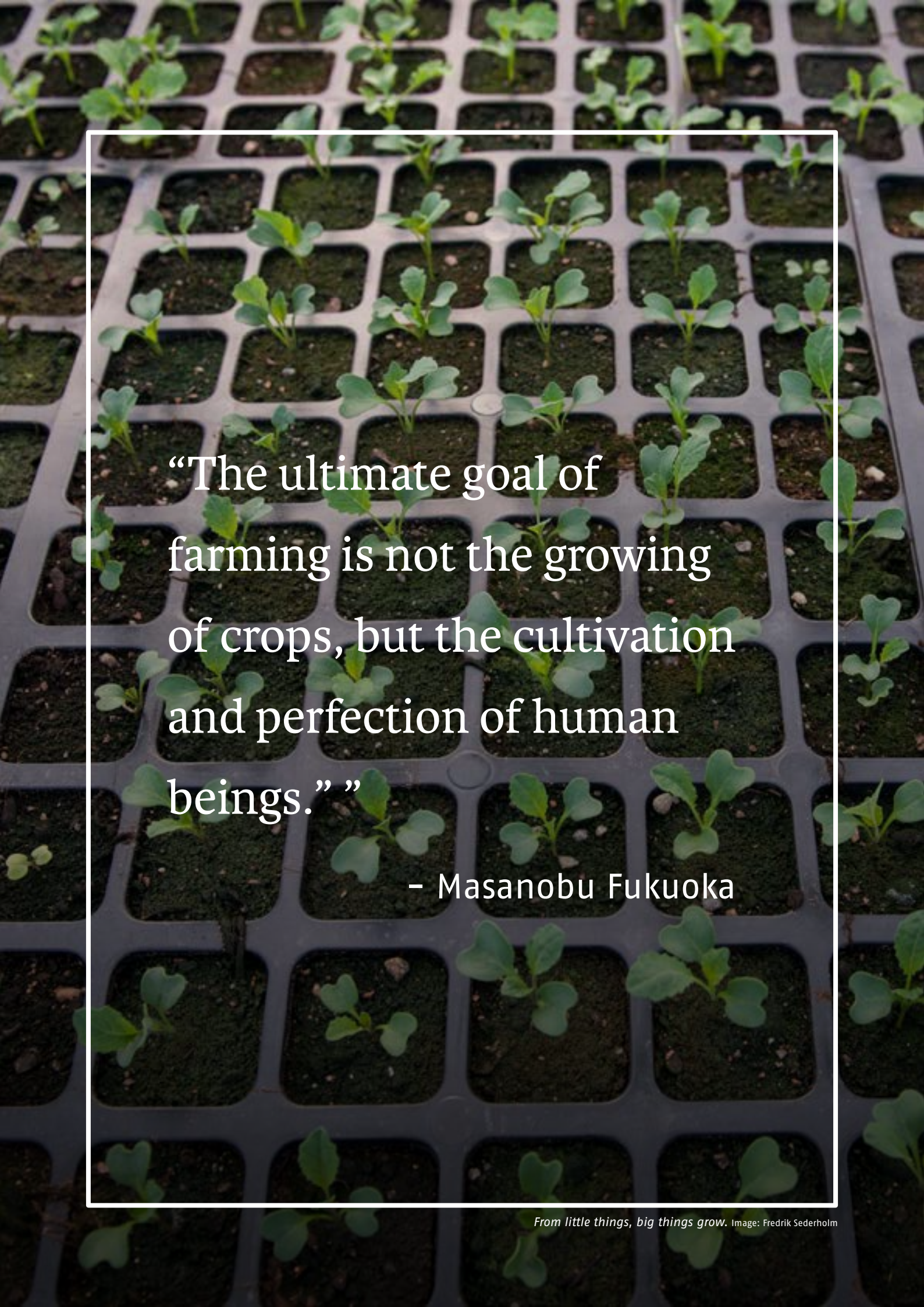


This case study has been written for the URBACT III action planning network AGRI-URBAN. The case study documents Norrbyvälle, an innovative local organisation in Södertälje which integrates social therapy and rehabilitation through a wide range of organic food based activities while constantly fostering the growth of people, nature and place. Our hope is that this case study will be a source of inspiration and for you and your city.

The Södertälje AGRI-URBAN project team would like to extend our thanks to everyone involved at Norrbyvälle for their cooperation, support and feedback throughout the writing process. You are an inspiration to us all.

We would also like to thank our external experts Eva Bjurholm and Hans von Essen for their tremendous work in capturing the essence and heart of Norrbyvälle in this text.





“The ultimate goal of farming is not the growing of crops, but the cultivation and perfection of human beings.” ”

– Masanobu Fukuoka



*Tools of the trade at Norrbypälle.* Foto: Fredrik Sederholm

## Background

**'Complementary-farming'** is a "new-old" concept used to describe the integration of farming and food production into an organisation for social, education or cultural reasons.

This case-study presents such an organisation – Norrbypälle in Järna, Södertälje. Over the past thirty years, Norrbypälle has pioneered the integration of social therapy and rehabilitation with regenerative land practices and local food production.

By integrating social therapy and rehabilitation with a wide range of activities including a working kitchen-garden, orchard, café, bakery, lunch restaurant, landscape management, animal husbandry and on farm processing of produce, Norrbypälle has created a resilient ecosystem that achieves their main goal of providing social therapy and rehabilitation while constantly fostering the growth of people, nature and place.

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# 1. Complementary-farming

## What is it?

Complementary-farming can be found in a wide range of fields and come in many shapes and sizes. Below is a short list of examples from Södertälje municipality:

### 'Complementary-farming' can be...

- an educational garden at a preschool where the children can learn to grow their own food and learn where their school lunches are grown.  
(Image 01 - Starrbäckens and Hölö preschool)
- a social therapy or rehabilitation centre where residents have access to 'green-therapy' in the form of therapeutic gardens, activities or animals.  
(Image 02 - Norrbyvälle)
- a museum that aims to show the genius of the past by showcasing farming techniques to provide a real-life experience that visitors can see, touch and taste.  
(Image 03 - Torekällberget)
- a CSA (community supported agriculture) with courses, events and a social mission that transforms unpreviously unused land  
(Image 04 - Under Tallarna)
- a youth centre that keeps bees as a way to stimulate interest in the environment and ecosystem services  
(Image 05 - Fornhöjden Youth Centre)
- hatching chickens in a primary school in order to give the students a first-hand understanding of life-cycles  
(Image 06 - Fornbackaskolan)
- a vegetable producer, or café that provides job-based training for people who are on the pathway to meaningful long-term employment.  
(Image 07 - Eko-odlarna in Gärtuna)
- a school kitchen that keeps a kitchen garden in order to use fresh produce in school lunches and provide the students with learning opportunities  
(Image 08 - Lina School Kitchen Garden)

## Why is it important?

Food will always be important. At the beginning of the 20th century, many schools in Sweden had their own kitchen gardens, which served both an educational and nutritional purpose. However, the rationalization and industrialization of the food system in post-war Sweden marginalized local food knowledge in large parts of the country and many of the school gardens, local producers and small scale farms disappeared.

Now a new trend is emerging. More and more people are interested in the origin of their food and they are hungry for knowledge. This trend has generated interest with many organisations introducing complementary-farming into their daily activities as they place great value in the ability to grow, harvest, share and enjoy their own produce.

## How integrated is it?

The level of integration and activity in 'complementary-farming' can vary. While some organizations may integrate small, seasonal or symbolic activities, others have integrated farming on a more permanent, holistic and large scale. Many organisations start small and successively increase the level of complementary-farming integration in order to support their main purpose and goal.

## Norrbyvälle

Norrbyvälle is a fine example of an organization that has gradually expanded complementary-farming and food based activities into a resilient ecosystem that supports their main goal - holistic social therapy and meaningful rehabilitation. Farming and food production is not the central purpose and vision behind Norrbyvälle – this is providing holistic social therapy – but it is an integral part of how they achieve this while fostering the growth of people, nature and place.



01: Learning where lunch comes from. Image: Fredrik Sederholm



02: Early Spring greenhouse at Norrbyvälle. Image: Fredrik Sederholm



03: Lindbloms Café, Torekällberget. Image: Fredrik Sederholm



04: May harvest at Under Tallarna. Image: Fredrik Sederholm



05: Fornhöjdens Youth Centre beehives. Image: Magnus Grimstedt



06: Fornbackaskolan hatches chickens! Image: Hampus Andersson



07: Eko-odlarna, Gärtuna. Image: Jordan Lane



08: Lina School Kitchen Garden & Chefs. Image: Fredrik Sederholm

## 2. Norrbyvälle

### 2.1. Location

Norrbyvälle is located just south of Järna, on rich agricultural land between Road 57 and the E4 European road in Södertälje municipality. Currently Norrbyvälle has operations on Norrbyvälle Farm, Skäve Farm and in central Järna. Norrbyvälle has different forms of LSS-accommodation (LSS - support, service and activities for people with disabilities) and daily activities for adults and young adults with neuropsychiatric diagnoses who are in need of daily support. The range of activities at Norrbyvälle has evolved over time, the origins of which can be traced to 1986.

### 2.2. History

In 1981 Skäve Farm was purchased by a foundation (Skäve Foundation) with a shared vision to create a biodynamic farm that could supply the local community of Järna with organic produce. A number of people pooled their resources and bought 'shares' in the farm - a pre-Kickstarter style of crowdfunding - which minimised the interest repayments on the bank loan. The buildings and fields of the farm were then leased to biodynamic farmers.

At the same time on Norrbyvälle Farm (located right next to Skäve Farm), an idea to build a social-therapeutic organisation with anthroposophical values for people with special needs in alliance with the Swedish LSS law was born. In 1992 the Skäve Foundation raised the possibility to expand the idea and activities on Norrbyvälle Farm to the buildings and land on Skäve Farm. In addition to their own property, Norrbyvälle has successively leased buildings and land that was previously used by the biodynamic farmers.

Today, Skäve Farm is home to rich range of independent organisations, with many private visitors enjoying the beautiful landscape. In addition to Norrbyvälle's LSS-accommodation and daily activities and the agriculture and farming activities on Skäve Farm, there is also a Waldorf preschool, a bank - Ekobanken, an accounting firm, artists' studio and a private horse stable.

Järna is home to many care and therapy institutions with LSS-participants. As a result of this there is a large demand for people educated in social-therapy. Therefore Norrbyvälle offers all permanent staff the opportunity to attend a 4 year professional training in social-therapy.

### 2.3. Economic Context

Skäve Farm is owned by the Skäve Foundation which subsequently leases buildings and land to different organisations and companies which share the core values of the foundation.

The main revenue stream for Norrbyvälle is the publicly funded LSS-contributions. The LSS contributions are based on the number of LSS-participants housed at Norrbyvälle by their respective home municipalities. The placement of participants is critical to Norrbyvälle. For example the LSS-contributions of 3-4 participants can finance the salary for a work-leader.

The other organisations and companies have different revenue streams, dependent on their main purpose and company form.

Via the social enterprise IDUN which was founded in 2016, Norrbyvälle has had periodical cooperation agreements with and participants via the various national and local employment agencies (Arbetsförmedlingen/Försäkringskassan/Samordningsförbundet). These agreements include long-term unemployed participants and those who are in need of work-based training or rehabilitation. The financial contributions for these participants are significantly lower than LSS-participants, as it requires 8-10 participants to finance the salary of a work-leader.

Over the last ten years, the financial contributions within the welfare sector in Sweden have been reduced, which has impacted the external placement of LSS-participants at municipal level. Municipalities have subsequently 'internalised' the placement of LSS-participants for financial reasons. Norrbyvälle has been directly affected by these changes in public policy and have been forced to adjust and adapt to the changed financial context. However, these changes in external policy have not changed the core idea, vision and values of Norrbyvälle. By investing in internal collaboration and cooperation between their own activities, Norrbyvälle has created a resilient system able to adapt to external changes.





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NORRBVÄLLE IN THE STOCKHOLM CONTEXT - 1:200,000 @A4

## 2.4. The Norrbyvälle Model


The driving force behind the Norrbyvälle Foundation is a vision to create the best possible conditions for their residents and participants to live, work and grow – from an economically, ecologically and socially sustainable perspective. The combined practice of social therapy and green-rehabilitation methods guide the daily activities. At the core of Norrbyvälle is the wellbeing and quality of life of the residents and participants. With close contact between the management, group leaders and participants, humanistic and holistic care permeates the entire organization. Norrbyvälle is based on the idea that the community strengthens the individual. By allowing each participant the opportunity to directly influence their own situation, each person receives individual support in the context of an active social community. Everyone, based on their ability, is offered a truly meaningful and individualized working life in social fellowship with others.

Individual work programs are customized to suit the interests and capacity of each participant. With the opportunity to choose working environments indoors in the café or lunch restaurant, or outdoors with the vegetable garden and landscape management each participant is able to find meaningful work with varies levels of responsibility, difficulty and importance. Flexibility, close circuit communication and openness are key to fostering the best possible development for each participant. For example, if someone would like to start a small on-site store and sell produce, or even choose to become an author, then every effort is made to accommodate these ideas and initiatives.

### Resilience & Sustainability

Norrbyvälle strives to be as self-sufficient as possible, with the kitchen garden, lunch restaurant and café playing central roles in this self-sufficient ecosystem. These three components provide the basis of the daily activities undertaken by residents and participants and demand a high level of collaboration, planning and cooperation between them. Sustainability and ecosystem health are core goals at Norrbyvälle. The concept of ‘regenerative enterprises’ (activities that improve the local conditions rather than exploit them) are central to the success of the Norrbyvälle model. Biodynamic farming techniques are used to produce vegetables, herbs, fruits and berries for the café and lunch restaurant. According to the chef, the lunch restaurant is 50% self-sufficient in vegetables.





Growing food is really quite simple. All you need is soil, seeds, water and sun. ”

– Jalle Assem  
– Head Gardener, Norrbyvälle



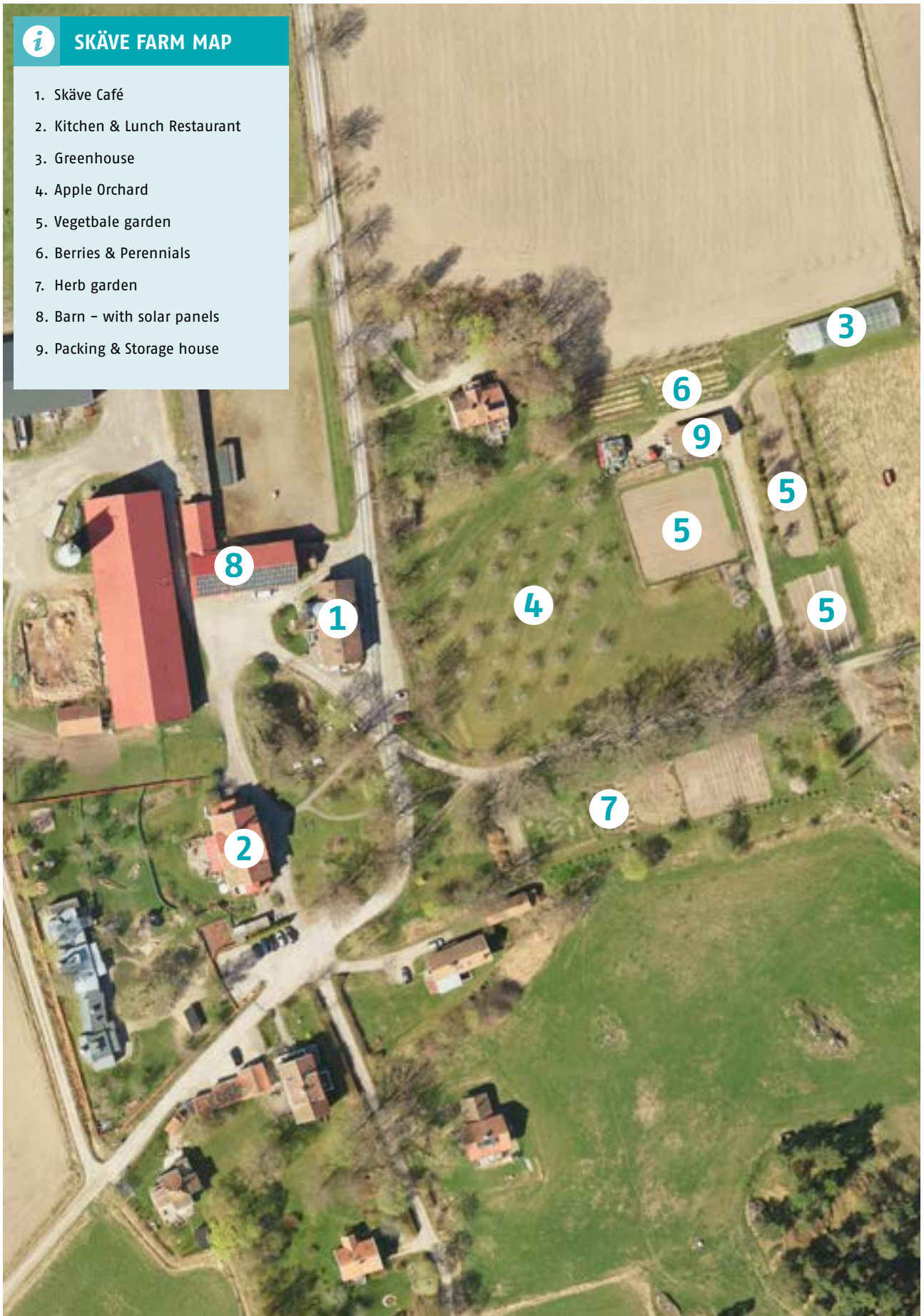
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NORRBYVÄLLE & SKÅVE FARM – SCALE 1:4000 @ A4



## SKÄVE FARM MAP

1. Skäve Café
2. Kitchen & Lunch Restaurant
3. Greenhouse
4. Apple Orchard
5. Vegetbale garden
6. Berries & Perennials
7. Herb garden
8. Barn - with solar panels
9. Packing & Storage house



0 10 20 30m

AERIAL VIEW – SCALE 1:1500 @ A4



## 3. The garden

### 3.1. Introduction

The garden at Norrbyvälle consists of approximately 4000m<sup>2</sup> of growing beds, complemented by a 250m<sup>2</sup> greenhouse and an apple orchard of eighty trees. As a general rule, 3-4 participants are assigned to the garden team throughout the growing season under the guidance of the head gardener. However, during the more intensive Spring-sowing and Autumn-harvest periods, the garden team can grow to include all participants at Norrbyvälle. During these times, it is important that work is conducted in a stress-free manner, and that all participants can work at a suitable pace.

### 3.2. Planning the crops

Each growing season is planned based on the evaluation of the previous season's harvests and results. Was there enough produce for the café and restaurant? Which crops sold the best? Which crops were grown well? Which crops produced a surplus? Was there any waste, if so, where from? How long did the preserves and pickles from the previous season last? Does the kitchen have any new special requests? Often times it is not possible to fulfill all the wishes from the kitchen, given the limits of the climate and growing season. On the other hand, the garden also likes to challenge the kitchen, encouraging them to try to incorporate new produce into the menus. Each season, this self-correcting system of supply and demand becomes stronger, which in turn informs the seasons to come.

### 3.3. Communication

The head gardener, head-chef and café manager have daily contact to discuss the current situation in their respective areas. Keeping the harvest fresh is a constant challenge in the relatively short growing season in Sweden, and something which is discussed often. While a lot can be grown and harvested in a short time frame, not everything can at point of harvest. How can the fresh produce be stored to preserve quality and nutrition? Currently large chiller-boxes are used to keep produce fresh. As these are emptied, space is made for upcoming harvests. It is especially important for the chef and the café manager to have an overview and control of the produce in the boxes. The capacity to harvest and store food is critical to the planning and controls what is grown at Norrbyvälle.

### 3.4. What produce is grown?

Given the unique climate and conditions that are present at Norrbyvälle – the relatively small cultivated area, national summer holidays in July, the central Swedish climate, limits of storage and access to external sales channels – a choice selection of suitable crops has evolved over time. These include different types of hardy beans - beans, peas, beans, cabbage (red cabbage, cabbage, cauliflower, Brussel sprouts, cauliflower, broccoli, red onion, garlic, yellow onions and various root vegetables - beetroot, carrots - and cucumbers, zucchini and pumpkin, lettuce and chard. Tomatoes are grown in the greenhouse which is also used to extend the growing season for many crops.

A significant addition to both the kitchen and the garden at Norrbyvälle is the apple orchard. Care of the orchard involves various tasks ranging from maintenance, harvesting, storage and processing, with the annual pruning carried out by a professional arborist. The bulk of the apple harvest is used to make apple juice, which is served in the lunch restaurant and café, or bottled, packaged and sold externally. Last year plum trees were added to the orchard to grow the diversity in the garden.

A central ingredient in the Swedish kitchen is the humble potato. However, due to the large land area needed to grow potatoes, and the lack of suitable storage area at Norrbyvälle, it is not economically viable to grow potatoes on site. While they continue to buy in potatoes for the kitchen, Norrbyvälle has started to experiment with the cultivation of heritage varieties which provide more value than just the raw product.

Since storage is such an important issue, Norrbyvälle has the ambition to build a root-cellar that could store potatoes, root vegetables and apples during the winter months.

### 3.5. Home-grown ideas

It is not just the head-chef and gardener that come up with ideas about what can be grown in the garden. Three years ago, at the initiative of the participants, Norrbyvälle started to grow berries. It has been a real success, especially for the café which now has the freedom to decorate their cakes and baked goods with fresh and frozen berries. An extension of berry growing is to make jams and preserves which in turn could increase the amount of home-made products for sale.

Norrbyvälle also grows a large amount of flowers that decorate the dining room and café. Nearly all the flowers grown in the garden are used by Norrbyvälle. The garden team has also grown flowers for 'self-pick' bouquets for visitors in the past; however this created too much extra work and stress for the participants and has not been continued.

A few years ago, an initiative was started to grow herbs at Norrbyvälle. These herbs are used in both the kitchen and the café. With the ability to freeze, dry and process fresh herbs, this initiative has created the opportunity to extend the 'garden season' into the winter with activities such as making herbal salt. Demand for herbs – fresh, frozen and processed – has increased internally at Norrbyvälle, but also from external visitors.

The advantage of growing herbs and berries is that they return as perennials year after year, which facilitates seasonal work and provides a calmer pace and added value to the garden, the dining room and the café.

### 3.6. What's next?

The gardener has plans to introduce both chickens and pigs as a complement to the garden. Keeping animals demands constant and continuous care which is a challenge at present. How this could be solved in the future is still unclear.







*Flowers in full bloom.* Image: Mats-Ola Olsson



*Winter. Spring. Summer. Autumn.* Images: Mats-Ola Olsson

## 4. A year in the garden

### Winter

Besides allowing time for long-term planning, winter is an important time for maintenance, repair and preparation at Norrbyvälle. While the garden rests, there are many daily activities to be completed. The greenhouse is cleaned for the coming growing season, snow is ploughed, trees tended and tools repaired. These activities are conducted by the participants under the guidance of the head gardener.

During winter, long before the first seed is planted in the greenhouse, the entire growing season is planned in detail. While it is the head gardener that orders the seeds for the coming season in early January, it is only after consultation with the head chef that the order can be placed. Tight communication ensures that the right crops are grown in the right amount. Some crops, like swiss chard are easy to grow – but have their limits in the kitchen. There are only so many ways you can cook swiss chard!

### Spring

Spring is a busy time. Seeds are sown in the greenhouse from February. There is a lot to be done when the seedlings are to be repotted and planted out. Lettuce is planted in the greenhouse in March, and by April, the first green leaves can be picked but the selection is limited. It is during this period that the kitchen purchases the greatest amount of fresh vegetables externally. When the last of the frost disappears, everything is set to go! After planting and sowing the garden beds, it is time to weed and prune. Periodically during spring, more labor is needed than the usual 3-4 participants that make up the garden team. During these times, other participants at Norrbyvälle also come in and help. May is an especially busy month.

### Summer

In Sweden, July is generally considered to be a holiday month. Ironically, July is also the most demanding month in the garden at Norrbyvälle. With most employees taking vacation during July, the activities are largely closed down. This is quite a challenge for the garden - which naturally produces the most work and harvest in July. Before the start of the summer holidays, the garden team must ensure that the weeding and pruning is complete so that each plant has the best chance to fend for itself while the garden team takes a well-deserved break. Rain, temperature and sunshine are monitored throughout the summer. For these tasks, "stand-by gardeners" from Norrbyvälle's accommodation are called upon. Despite the holiday season, the gardener also keeps an eye on things.

When everyone returns from the holidays and life at Norrbyvälle returns to normal the garden is in full production. This is the time to make the most of all the fresh produce and to start preserving produce for the winter.

### Autumn

The harvest is a continuous task, which effectively takes place from March to December. During May and June, the greenhouse can produce lettuce, radishes, dill, basil and cabbage. Some perennials plants such as rhubarb and asparagus are also harvested in June. The harvest months August, September and October are very labor-intensive. Herbs are picked, sorted and in some cases dried. Root vegetables are harvested, washed and prepared for storage.

When there is a lot to be harvested it is time for a harvest-party. There is a local tradition and culture of turning labor-intensive occasions into joint celebrations in order to turn work into fun! There is usually a planting party in the spring and a harvest-festival in the autumn, especially when the apples are to be picked.

The harvest continues all the way to Christmas with the last kale from the garden beds and the last greens from the greenhouse. As no produce is sold externally, vegetables of all shapes and sizes are taken care of, in doing so you do not have to adapt to market demands for standard sizes and perfection. The first frost quickly reduces the range of fresh produce, but there is still plenty of variety. Cold-hardy vegetables such as kale, Brussels sprouts and red cabbage are saved for the Christmas table. Traditionally, you would fast after Christmas - and this is also true of Norrbyvälle's complementary farming. If the growing season has been kind, an excess of pumpkin, root vegetables and preserves will keep well into the New Year until the first new crops arrive just in time for Easter.

## 5. Kitchen & lunch restaurant

### 5.1. Lunch

The lunch service is a central activity at Norrbyvälle, with the kitchen and lunch restaurant developed and designed with the participants in mind. Tasks range in complexity and include preparing, cooking, baking and processing the products grown in the garden and also preparing the dining room for the lunch service. The restaurant serves an organic and biodynamic lunch 5 days a week, with a portion of the produce coming from the garden at Norrbyvälle. The restaurant serves approximately 35 lunch guests daily. Two thirds of the guests come from Norrbyvälle, while another 10-15 are regulars who come from outside.

Taking into account the normal number of workers in the kitchen, there is a limit to what the kitchen is capable of doing. On special occasions with pre-ordering, the kitchen can extend the lunch service to 50 portions. However this requires a temporary increase in the workforce. In order to be able to cater for extra lunch guests, all external guests are required to pre-book. Knowing exactly how many portions need to be catered for allows the kitchen to plan the lunch service allowing them to drastically reduce food waste.

External lunch guests have the pleasure of enjoying fresh produce from the garden and the surrounding landscape while soaking up Skåve's rural setting and the warm atmosphere of Norrbyvälle.

### 5.2. Menu planning

The menu very seasonal and is planned according to the availability of produce from the garden. The head-chef, who is in charge of both the lunch restaurant and the kitchen, has developed a "sustainable system" of dishes that are prepared according to the availability of fresh produce from the garden and produce that has been preserved, frozen or pickled earlier. In preparation for the long winter, the kitchen freezes and preserves as much fresh produce as possible.

Planning the winter menu is especially difficult as the garden is bare and there are no fresh vegetables to harvest. During this time, the menu is built on a range of recurring dishes with the same base ingredients and a selection of different pesto and sauces.

### 5.3. Seasons

Throughout the season, the menu is adapted to the rhythm of the garden and its ability to deliver fresh produce, combined with the kitchen's ability to process, preserve, freeze and pickle what is left. During the winter months, the kitchen must rely on frozen vegetables from the garden and the additional purchase of vegetables from a biodynamic wholesaler.

During the winter you will find pumpkin, mangold, cauliflower, beans, parsley, basil, peanut beans, rhubarb, currants and leek in the freezers.

Through constant collaboration and communication between the kitchen, garden and all participants, a collection of well-loved recipes has evolved over the years. The goal is to be a sustainable lunch restaurant, with dishes that are not only tasty, but also fresh, nutritious and appetizing. It is difficult to please everyone all the time, and the kitchen tries to balance this goal with the personal requests of the participants. This means that on occasion, the kitchen will serve crowd pleasers such as lasagna, tacos and pizza. Much to the delight of some lunch guests!

### 5.4. Food as knowledge

Quiet often the participants have very little experience with vegetarian food when they arrive at Norrbyvälle. The vast majority are accustomed to simple meals such as pizza, hamburgers and other 'convenience' foods. Therefore, the kitchen has the ambition to use food as an educational tool, partly through ingredients and cooking meals, but also as a tool for social training by staff and participants dining together. Using food as an educational tool can include learning to make ketchup from fresh tomatoes or learning to bake bread from scratch.

Much emphasis is placed on the visual presentation of the lunch buffet. A standard lunch buffet boasts salads, warm dishes, sauces and vinaigrettes, mains and condiments - often presented on their own in order for the guests to choose and combine different dishes on their plate. With a small workforce in both the kitchen and the lunch restaurant, there is a limit to the variation of dishes that can be prepared, as too much variation would create too much work and stress in the kitchen.

## 5.5. Communication

Through the short circuit feedback loops between the kitchen and the garden, a solid framework for vegetable garden has evolved. The knowledge and experience gained has shown what is viable, functional and realistic both in the kitchen and the garden. Seasonality means that some dishes are served only during the summer months, such as lighter salad dishes, while other dishes will return during the winter months. A basic range includes salads, beans, root vegetables, carrot and parsley. Tomato and cucumber will return in the summer.

## 5.6. Trial and error

Over the years, there have been many different ideas about what can be grown in the garden and most of these ideas have been tested. One such idea was chili, which is quite popular in many kitchen gardens in Sweden. However, after a very successful first crop, the large amount of chili grown at Norrbyvälle proved too difficult to use in the kitchen, and were too hot for many of the lunch guests. After a short discussion it was decided to reduce the amount of chili plants and to grow a milder variety that could better complement the lunch buffet.

Another idea was to grow quince to make marmalade. While no marmalade was made, the rose flowers were picked as decorations for the restaurant tables as they were so fragrant. A very successful idea has been the asparagus. Although it takes a few years to establish, it is easy to manage and very popular in the kitchen. Other examples of crops that have been successful are horseradish and dill.

The herb garden, started only a few years ago is now well established. Not only is it a perennial system, it also can be harvested up to three times a year, providing work well suited to the daily activities of Norrbyvälle. The herbs are first harvested, cleaned, dried and combined into different herb-mixes - for example "Italian Salad Mix" - that can be used in the lunch restaurant, the café or packaged and sold.

Storage and preserving produce is a big challenge. Some crops are difficult to harvest and use on the same day. Sometimes there is simply not enough time to harvest, cook and preserve crops on the same day, especially if there is a lot to harvest. It is because of this, frozen vegetables may be used, even when fresh are picked at the same time.

Currently, Norrbyvälle can supply itself with 20-30% of its vegetable needs. The remaining 70% is purchased externally from a biodynamic wholesaler. With the added investment of an earth cellar for winter storage, Norrbyvälle could supply itself with up to 50% of its vegetable, berry and fruit needs.

## 5.7. Collaboration in practice


At times during the year, the garden team requires extra help from the other participants and workers at Norrbyvälle. These days are known as "working-days". Working-days are organised for a number of reasons, from "saving the chives" before they flower, to helping weed and prepare the garden beds.

Every year there are two "harvest-weeks" between August and September. During these weeks, the garden team mobilises all participants and workers at Norrbyvälle - which consequently temporarily puts all other activities on hold. Due to the busy harvest period, the lunch restaurant closes every Monday in September, as the participants and workers are in the garden harvesting. A good example of this collaboration can be seen during "apple-day" where everyone gathers to harvest the apples and the work is turned into a celebration.

## 5.8. Organisation

The kitchen manager is in charge of both the lunch restaurant and the kitchen. She has worked at Norrbyvälle for ten years. As with all supervisory roles, she must ensure that the working environment in the kitchen and the lunch restaurant is well structured and organised in order to avoid stressful situations. Usually, the kitchen team consists of 3-4 participants, who produce up to 50 lunch servings a day, five days a week.

It is important that the participants receive varied and diverse tasks in order to encourage independence and their own self-initiative. Responsibility for different recipes is divided according to ability, as it is important that all food preparation can be carried out as trouble free as possible. Food safety and hygiene is taught to all participants, as is the importance of composting and sustainability.

A photograph of a kitchen scene. A woman in a white chef's hat and a blue and white striped apron is smiling and looking at a man in a dark blue shirt. They are both focused on preparing food in a stainless steel tray. The kitchen is well-lit with a window in the background showing greenery. Various kitchen items like a blender, kettle, and shelves with containers are visible.

Our goal is to serve food  
that takes care of people,  
place and the earth.

- Head chef, Norrbyvälle

## 6. Skäve Café

### 6.1. The Café as a showcase

Skäve Café is located in the former grain store at Skäve farm, which was renovated and restored in the late 1990's with the support of Södertälje municipality, the Swedish Employment Agency and the then Labor Market Institute. The idea behind the renovation was to encourage people who - for various reasons - were long term unemployed, to find skills and meaningful work.

Initially, the café was opened for a three month trial period. It has been over 17 years since the first trial period, and Skäve Café has been open ever since. Due to Skäve Café's central location, it is often the first building guests see upon arrival, and therefore also functions as a reception for Norrbyvälle and a showcase of all the different activities that take place there.

### 6.2. Working at the café

The café is led by the café manager who has been working at Norrbyvälle and Skäve Café for more than eight years. In addition, the workforce consists of 2-3 participants from Norrbyvälle, as well as occasional work-based trainees from the Swedish Employment Agency. The café also welcomes students from the hospitality program at the local secondary school. There is also resource staff at Norrbyvälle who can replace the core group when necessary in order for the café to keep ordinary working hours.

The café participants have professional titles such as bakers, pastry-chefs and cake-makers. From an educational and social point of view, these professional titles give the participants real professional pride in their work, which is also reflected by their "real" professional uniforms. An important element of social training is to be responsive to the participant's wishes and ideas, to capture what can motivate each and every one to take further steps in their own development. The café provides the participants with an excellent opportunity, despite their varied functional abilities, to participate in a social environment that, on the one hand, has a stable internal environment, but also offers contact with visitors and guests.

### 6.3. A week at the café

The café is open to the public Wednesday-Friday between 10:00 and 15:00. The café follows a weekly rhythm with major tasks such as bread baking and cake making taking place on Fridays, with ongoing tasks spread out during the remainder of the week. On Thursdays and Fridays, the café serves hot soup. On average, 20 liters of soup, which is about 40 servings, is prepared a few times a week. The soup of the day is decided by the surplus crops from the garden - beetroot and kale are popular choices.

On the café wish list, is a larger bakery and patisserie in order to bake more bread, pastries and to meet the demand for the very popular cakes and tarts that are made at the café.

### 6.4. Planning – Café & Garden

Weekly planning meetings are an important instrument in the coordination and cooperation between the kitchen, restaurant, garden and café. As is the case for the other activities at Norrbyvälle, the café follows the seasons and is guided by the rhythm of the garden and the harvests. During the busier times of spring sowing and autumn harvest, the entire workforce at the café is involved in the garden.

The café also plays a central role in the annual Christmas market, selling produce and products from Norrbyvälle such as spices, herbs, and bread and also pressed apple juice from the "apple-days" in the orchard. Apples provide an important connection between the garden and the café. Apples are harvested systematically which ensures the participants are involved in every step of the process from the care of the trees, to harvesting, processing to be used in pastries and pressing to make apple juice which is either served at Norrbyvälle or packaged and available for purchase at the café.

The garden provides the café with a range of fresh produce that is used in everything from sandwiches to cakes and pastries. Salad leaves, parsley, tomatoes and cucumber are used in sandwiches, while fresh berries are used to decorate cakes and pastries. When available, berries are used fresh with the surplus frozen and stored to be used in the winter.

## 6.5. Potential & Goals

A future goal is to be able to open the café on Saturdays in order to cater for weekend visitors. This would create more work, but also bring in more revenue. Just as is the case for the garden and the lunch restaurant, the café would like more storage space for vegetables which would mean they can increase their level of self-sufficiency. Another goal for the café is a larger bakery, which would allow more participants the opportunity to work in the bakery and also increase the amount of baked goods available for sale.

Similar to the lunch restaurant, the café is a long way from being totally self-sufficient on the produce that the garden grows and that which they can bake and produce themselves. Many products are still purchased wholesale - milk, coffee and tea for example.

## 6.6. Budget & Economy

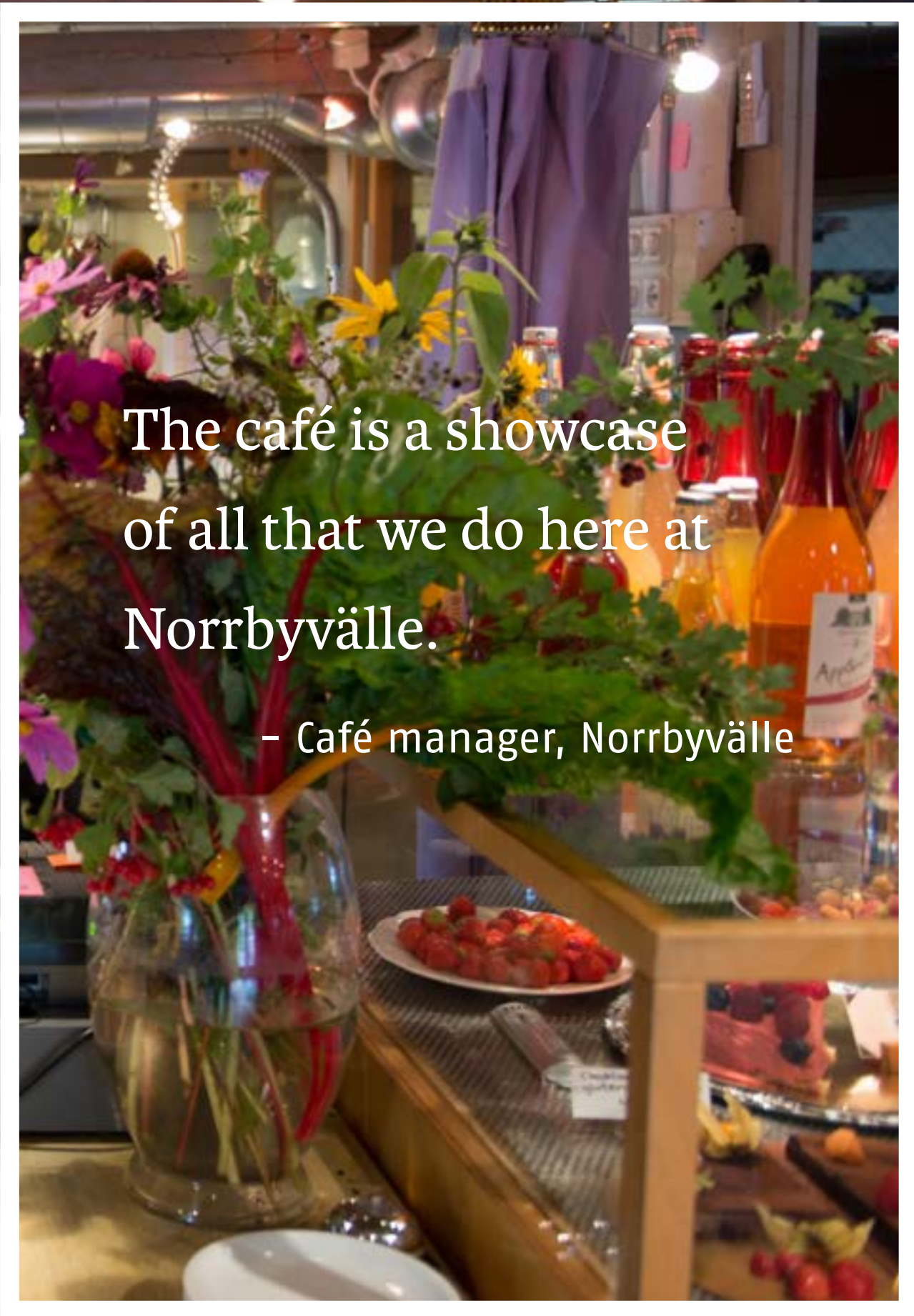
Like the garden and the lunch restaurant, the café has an annual budget for the "result-unit" to be followed. Each of the daily activities accounts for their own finances, but it is ultimately the whole of Norrbyvälle that counts. An ambition that is recurring in all units is to shift the relationship between LSS caregiver income, external income and self-sustainability through the gardens and farms. In addition to the part of the cost of the workforce financed by the LSS public sector contributions, the lunch room and the café have revenues from the lunch and café guests, the internal and the outside. The garden, in turn, has an internal standardized annual income agreement with the kitchen and the café, as well as the housing, which, in general, compared to other activities in the whole of Norrbyvälle, makes the economy as smooth as possible.





SMORGÅSAR

KRÄMIGR OCH MÅTTANDE...



The café is a showcase  
of all that we do here at  
Norrbyvälle.

– Café manager, Norrbyvälle

# 7. Conclusion

## 7.1. Reflections and realities

At Norrbyvälle there are common goals to strengthen the integration between food production and all the other activities, to increase the amount of food produced and at the same time make the techniques used increasingly biodynamic and ecologically sustainable. The garden, the café and the lunch restaurant recently applied for and have been granted a Demeter certification.

Norrbyvälle operates within a Swedish context and must deal with the challenges and opportunities found in the Swedish legislative and cultural landscape. This is especially true of the July summer holiday period, which coincides quite unfortunately with the busy summer period of the garden. Other challenges lie in the social therapeutic reality, where on one hand many of the users can be very stress-sensitive and, on the other hand, can become more motivated by being active in the context of real-world tasks and challenges. Organisations in the same field in Sweden or in other countries will experience similar and different problems. But you will always have some things in common - wherever in the world you are.

All groups and result-units at Norrbyvälle are aware of their boundaries and interdependence with each other - therefore it is possible to regulate the economy between the units with simple standard budget templates and values. This understanding of the interconnectedness and the flow of different capital between the units allows them to clearly follow their annual seasons and plan for the future. Food is an integral part of daily life and daily habits at Norrbyvälle. How to integrate local grown, organic and biodynamic food with the varied dietary habits of a steady flow of new participants is a question that is constantly being asked. The combination of the many celebrations and informal social situations, with structured ongoing working environments help to enrich and integrate new participants.

Norrbyvälle has a long history of innovation and 'thinking outside of the box', which has made adopting and implementing new ideas easier. It does not matter if the idea originates in the management meeting room or a casual conversation with the participants, all good ideas are supported. The development of the café is a fine example of this.

Norrbyvälle is not an island. Externally, Norrbyvälle operates within a market economy and must adjust (everything from LSS-support to the café guests) to changing market conditions. Internally, Norrbyvälle endeavors to build a culture around their central values and goals - it is thirty years since they started and they are constantly developing, adapting and evolving. This is true resilience.

## 7.2. Tips from Norrbyvälle

Rediscovering and reconnecting the links between food production - agriculture, fishing, hunting, handcraft and horticulture - is more than a trend. The anonymous production of food, sold at the cheapest possible price is approaching ecosystem constraints - with awareness growing amongst producers and consumers. There is a positive future for those wishing to integrate farming and food production (complementary farming).

*Invest in knowledge and education. Make a long-term vision and at the same time find simple steps that make visible positive change quickly - ensure these steps do not involve large risks!*

*Start small and grow with time. When a crop is tried and tested in the garden, the café and the kitchen, it is easier to introduce something new!*

*Begin by growing crops you like and eat - seasonal leafy vegetables is a good start! Learn to grow them from seed and make sure they are rich in vitamins and minerals and well suited to your growing environment!*

*Remember...food and farming grows culture too! It is so much more than just food!*



*The grass is always greener at Norrbyvälle. Image: Mats-Ola Olsson*

## 8. Norrbyvälle inspires Torekällberget!

Sometimes you do not have to look far to find inspiration. Inspired by the Norrbyvälle model of using complementary-farming as a tool to deliver social therapy and rehabilitation, Södertälje municipality has established a 250m<sup>2</sup> vegetable garden at the Torekällberget 18th century open-air museum. This vegetable garden will provide fresh produce - vegetables, berries and fruit - to the two municipal run cafés and bakery at Torekällberget, much in the same way the garden at Norrbyvälle serves the lunch restaurant and Skåve café with fresh produce. In contrast to Norrbyvälle which uses complementary-farming to provide social-therapy to its participants, the garden, bakery and cafés at Torekällberget provide job-based training for the long-term unemployed. The model is the same, but the context and target audience is different.

In 2016, the decision was made to establish a 'Work Training Arena' at Torekällberget - creating an environment for people who are long-term unemployed to gain work experience and other practical skills in order to re-enter the job-market. With a modest investment of 300,000SEK (30,000 EURO) from the Södertälje Municipal Department of Design and Planning's 'Growing & Farming Strategy' the land, fencing and soil for the vegetable garden was prepared late in the 2017 growing season. Currently the garden is managed by Eko-odlarna i Telje - a social enterprise which grows organic vegetables on municipal land - however the plan is for Torekällberget to manage the garden from 2018 and onwards.

The cafés and the bakery are open year round are currently managed by the Södertälje Diet Unit. Starting with the first café (Lindbloms Café) in 2016 and since renovating the second (Bellevue Café) - the cafés have been incredibly popular and successful in providing job-based training. During the first year a number of people who received training at Lindbloms Café have gone on to find permanent positions elsewhere in the municipality. A result which has been very encouraging for the Work Training Arena which is also linked to the ESF project Map2020.

Just as the kitchen, garden, café and lunch restaurant at Norrbyvälle cooperate with each other, the goal of the vegetable garden at Torekällberget is to increase the diversity of activities and opportunities in the work training arena and to complement the cafés - while also strengthening the pedagogical aspect of the museum.

The garden in its current size does not have the capacity to grow all the fresh produce for the café which currently serves a range of soups, pie and pastries. The café and the garden are in the process of identifying crops which are useful in the café, can be grown in the garden and are representative of the 1800's in Södertälje.

We are not of the illusion that a vegetable garden of 250m<sup>2</sup> is the solution to food-security in Södertälje. However, what this small garden represents is critical to understanding how we can build a sustainable future for Södertälje as it embodies a truly integrated and multidisciplinary approach. Three different departments of Södertälje Municipality have collaborated in the creation of the garden - Department of Culture (who manage the museum), Department of Education (the Diet Unit who manage the cafés) and the Department of Design & Planning (who financed the garden).

There are a number of benefits to the complementary-farming at Torekällberget; the cafés and the garden provide visitors to the museum with healthy food, help people return to the job-market, increase 'food literacy' in the wider community, raise the status of food in the political context and strengthen the pedagogical work of the museum.

Quite impressive for just 250m<sup>2</sup> of garden beds!



### INTEGRATED APPROACH

- Torekällberget is managed by the Cultural Office.
- The cafés are managed by the Diet Unit – Education Office
- The vegetable garden was funded by the City Planning Office.
- Some products served at the cafés have been created through the ERDF project MATLUST.
- The Work Training Arena is organised in collaboration with the ESF project MAP2020
- A private enterprise – Norrbyvälle inspired the practice



**BEFORE...**



**AFTER...**



**Södertälje  
kommun**

**Södertälje Municipality**

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