

The **Powerful** Garden

Although domestic gardens cover a significant area, they are one of the least known land use categories. Hidden behind the façade of urban and residential development, they are currently a footnote in housing policy and not explicit included in spatial planning, socio-economic and environmental policies. Households consider domestic gardens mainly as little paradises, safe family havens and places of direct contact with nature. However, hundreds of thousands of gardens make a big thing. The collectivity of domestic gardens – the ‘garden complex’ – can play a strategic role in various challenges of our society like public health, environment, biodiversity, food security and climate change. This book presents a collection of emerging views on the garden complex in order to put the garden on the different agendas of research and policy. It collects the current state of knowledge on gardens from different experts in various disciplines, mainly in a Flemish context. The authors write about the background of the present-day Flemish garden, their spatial distribution and connection, the impact of gardens on the environment, biodiversity in gardens, and the role of gardens in the livability of neighborhoods. Together with other green themes like greenways, community gardens and urban agriculture, domestic gardens are part of an important rural-urban interface. It is time for more systematic research on gardens, and planners and managers should give more attention to the green faces of development in their strategies towards enhanced sustainability.

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Emerging views on
the garden complex

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