

Revaluing vegetable gardens and renaturalizing the city...

Lleida, Spain

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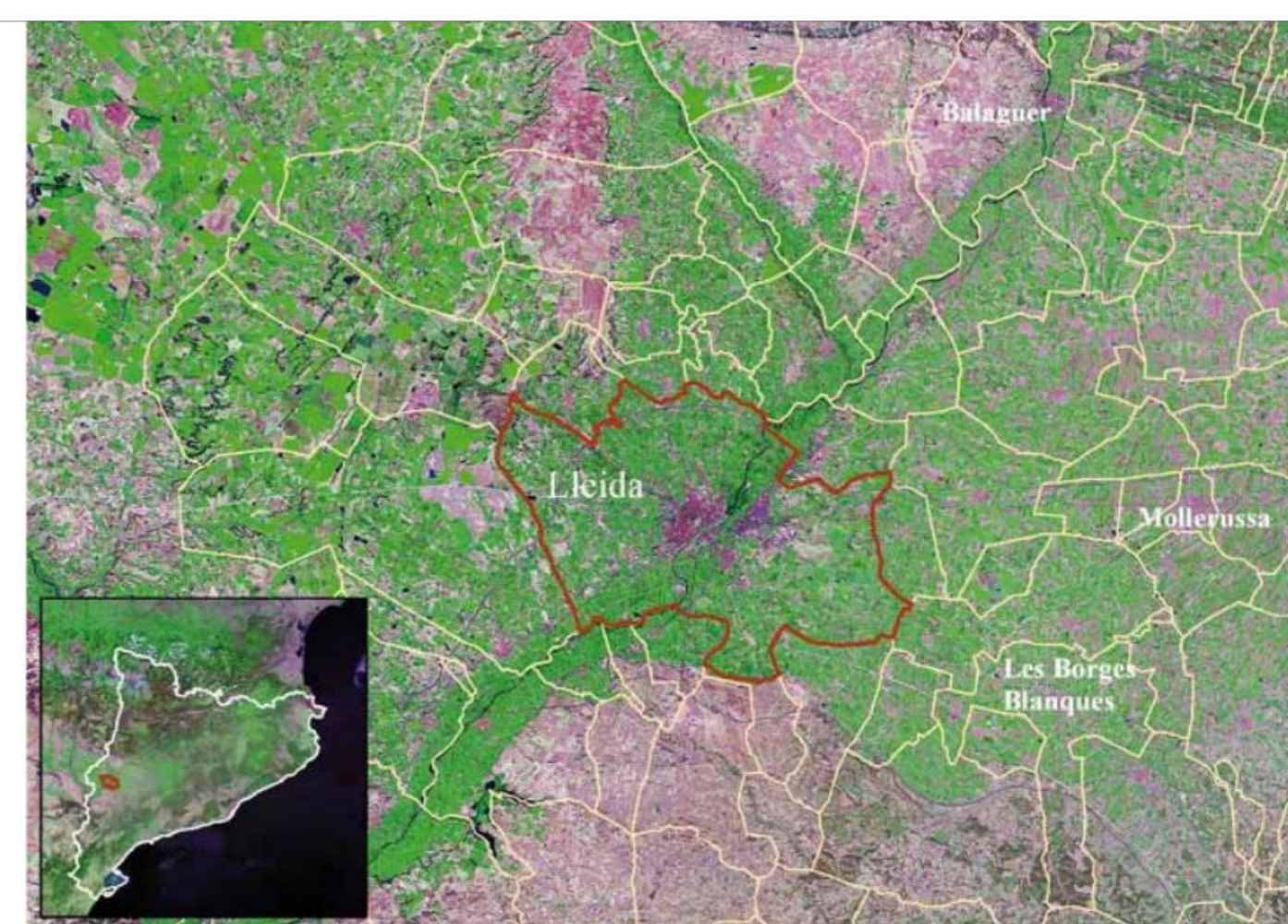
Background

THE PROBLEM:

- Rural/urban disconnect.
- Abandonment of traditional family farms and livestock farms
- Environmental impoverishment of the surroundings

PROFILE OF LLEIDA

- 140,000 inhabitants / 12,863 hectares of orchards.
- Located inland, in an agricultural plain, between the Pyrenees and the river Ebro.
- 150 kms away from Barcelona.



Approach



What are they working on?

- Revaluing the agricultural environment of the city: historical (identity), social, environmental and productive values.
- Promote the vegetable gardens (family and school), and the Huerta de Lleida.
- Encourage ecological horticulture, self-composting, the presence of biodiversity and a more natural and sustainable management of open spaces.

What was the starting point?

- For more than 10 years we have been promoting the Huerta and organic gardens from different initiatives and disseminating the importance of biodiversity in Lleida.



Methodology



The tools used have been:

- Bringing schools and citizens closer to the agricultural and livestock farms of the Huerta (guided tours, proximity market).
- Promote social and school gardens and composting, with training, advice, resources and social dynamization.
- Promote and encourage biodiversity (introducing traditional varieties of vegetables, installing wildlife refuges).
- The project is led by the Lleida City Council (with occasional collaboration from the University of Lleida, producers and neighbors associations, the AdV Ecológica de Ponent).
- The action is financed with own funds and European aids (Agriproxi Project, PRTR Next Generation).



Outcome



What have they achieved?

- Create a social network of people/entities/producers/schools that support each other.
- Strengthen the link between people and nature and their environment.
- Recovering traditional varieties of vegetables and helping to improve urban biodiversity.

Next steps

- Renaturalize the city through the creation of biodiversity oases, a more "natural" management of urban greenery, a better connection between vegetable garden and city (green paths, ecological corridors)...

Challenge: How to extend the link with nature and the environment to all citizens.

Lessons learned

- The importance of making visible and making known or recognizing what we want to be valued.
- To seek the personal link, the personal experience, to understand and be able to act.
- Challenges:
- Ensuring that initiatives can be sustained over time.
- Need to repeat over time the training/advice/resources...
- To guarantee the incorporation of products from Lleida's vegetable garden into the daily life of schools and citizens.