

Cooperative Ondergrond is a non-profit cooperative association of social entrepreneurs. We independently realise ecological and social goals, while maintaining the balance between profitable and unprofitable activities.

At Ondergrond we initiate, design, realise and maintain food forests and edible green spaces based on food forest principles in and around the city. We also work across different levels to create the social, cultural, financial and spatial conditions for these places to thrive.

In the short term by developing models through which food forests can function and be part of the current society and in the long run by organising society more and more according to food forest principles (socially, ecologically, economically).

Thus, Ondergrond creates fertile soil in which projects do not stand alone, isolated, but are embedded in the local community and contribute to a sustainable, liveable and inclusive society.

## DECENTRALISED URBAN FOOD FOREST

Since 2012 the Rotterdam Forest Garden Network has realised 15 projects in the Rotterdam region based on food forest principles, varying in size from edible forest backyard gardens to a one hectare edible park. The locations in the city are developed and maintained by Ondergrond as one decentralised food forest: Voedselbos Rotterdam. In 2021 more locations will be added to this network of urban food forests.

## AGRICULTURAL FOOD FORESTS

In the wider region around Rotterdam Ondergrond is involved in several agricultural food forest projects in the countryside, ranging from 6 to 15 hectares, as part of the Duurzame Doorbraak program set up by Stichting Voedselbosbouw Nederland. The projects, developed with farmers, entrepreneurs and landowners are either in development or are being planted.

## CONNECTING CITY AND COUNTRYSIDE

Voedselbos Rotterdam creates a support base and a potential market for food forest products which these larger agricultural projects can profit from. By working both in the city and the countryside and by linking these two worlds together, we strive to change the food system from both ends.



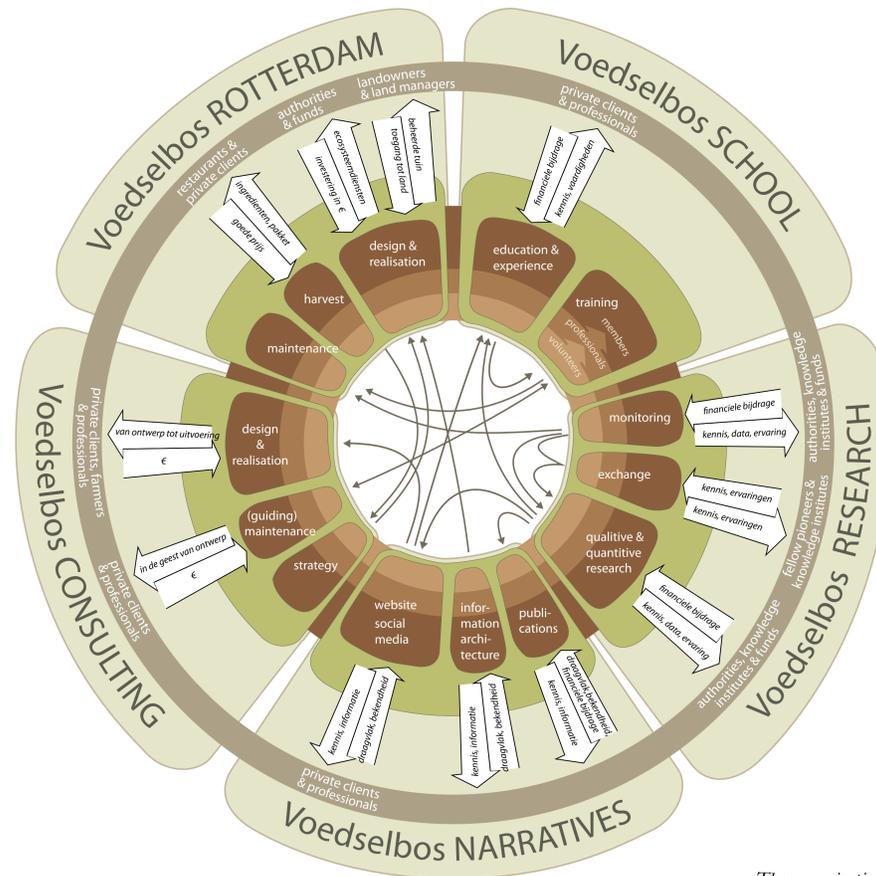
Food Forest RESEARCH

Food Forest SCHOOL

Food Forest ROTTERDAM

Food Forest CONSULTING

Food Forest NARRATIVES



The organisation of Ondergrond



Model for a city oriented food forest network

Locations in the Rotterdam region



1. *Voedselbos Kralingen* (2013)  
The oldest food forest in Rotterdam is situated in the historical "Nieuwe Plantage Park" and originates from the (temporary) Community Garden Kralingen-West. While searching for a (prospective) permanent place in the park, a suitable location was found next to nursing home Aafje. Trees and shrubs were planted in 2013 with permission from the municipality. As the planting and soil develop, the herb layer will be planted. Through its public character harvest is shared between Ondergrond and local inhabitants.



2. *Pniël / Geheime Tuin* (2014)  
The playground of the Vredehof school borders the rehabilitation garden of nursing home Pniël. Together with Pniël, funding was raised to transform the garden into an edible nature garden of 500 m<sup>2</sup>. The limited space means there is no room for a canopy layer, so it is defined as an edible nature garden created and designed along food forest principles. As well as being a therapeutic garden for residents of the nursing home, it is also a school garden for children: a beautiful cross-pollination.



3. *Voedselbos Vlaardingen* (2015)  
Voedselbos Vlaardingen is a semi-public food forest and at 9000m<sup>2</sup> is the largest food forest in the area. It is located in the reactional zone around Vlaardingen which marks the transition from city to countryside. With production of food, other crops and through education, it is developed as an alternative model for the ecological and reactional management of similar locations. It is managed by Foundation Voedselbos Vlaardingen. Ondergrond remains involved as an advisor and partner.



4. *Voedselbos de Overtuin* (2018)  
Through the collaboration between Trompenburg Garden & Arboretum and Ondergrond, the rich botanical knowledge of Trompenburg is now coupled with the innovative concept of food forestry. The Overtuin (1.4 ha) is designed to tell the story of food forests to a general audience. The different thematic parts deal with basic principles as well as different forms of food forestry and their place in the natural landscape. Through this collaboration both Trompenburg and Ondergrond are able to reach a new audience.



5. *SKAR Tuinen* (2020)  
In collaboration with SKAR (Foundation for Artist Accommodations Rotterdam), Ondergrond transformed five tiled schoolyards and gardens into semi-public or private green oases, creating added value for tenants, local residents, (urban) nature and the urban climate. Site construction is paid for by Rotterdams Weerwoord, a municipal project promoting climate-adaptation, because the garden contributes to the "sponge effect" of the city while reducing heat stress in paved neighbourhoods.



6. *Natuurgoed Ziedewij* (2021)  
Natuurgoed Ziedewij is a private initiative for a recreational area with a public character. The estate is on the outskirts of Rotterdam near the town of Barendrecht. In the project, the development of a limited number of homes and lodges is linked to a publicly accessible food forest of six hectares aimed at production and recreation. The long lines characteristic to this culturally historic landscape are taken into account in the planting and design of the project.