

Norbert Müller, David Knight & Peter Werner (Eds.)

Book of Abstracts

Third Conference of the COmpetence NeTwork URban ECology

Urban Biodiversity & Design

Implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity in towns and cities



Topic 1 Biodiversity of urban-industrial areas and its evaluation

Urban Flora: historic, contemporary and future trends

Philip James^{1*}

¹ University of Salford, The Crescent,
M5 4WT Salford, United Kingdom

* Presenting author: P.James@salford.ac.uk



The trend towards increasing urbanisation was set as the early farmers abandoned a hunter-gatherer lifestyle and began to settle in villages. City life is now the most common lifestyle as more people live in cities and towns than in rural areas. Each individual city has developed along a unique trajectory but they all share the common feature that native and exotic plant species exploit habitats which variously replicate those of more natural areas and are unique to urban areas. Three factors emerge as being paramount in the historic, contemporary and future development of urban areas: population growth, climate change and technological change. From a critical review of extant literature temporal and spatial trends in species richness, life-histories and origins of plants are identified. Trends and predictions for societal and technological influences in cities and towns are used to generate broad scenarios of future urban development. These scenarios provide a basis from which the author explores how the flora of cities may develop in the future. The resultant trajectories are assessed within the context of the Convention on Biological Diversity. This analysis raises research and policy challenges which have relevance for ecologists, planners and politicians.