

# Mein Baum Meine Stadt

## “Count me in!”: More Street Trees for Hamburg

Hamburg's Ministry for Urban Development and Environment has spent millions over the years on the maintenance of its street trees. However, budgetary resources did not stretch to replacing trees that had to be felled as a result of disease or for safety reasons. This has resulted in a large number of gaps in the streetscape. The campaign 'Mein Baum – Meine Stadt. Ich mach' mit!' (My tree – My city. Count me in!) strives to change this. Within the scope of events for the European Green Capital 2011, the Senate of Hamburg released two million euros for planting the symbolic number of 2011 trees. The citizens of Hamburg were also offered an opportunity to give their own financial support to the campaign.



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# Hamburg is a green city – and committed too

The Ministry of Environment's view of the campaign

Hamburg is known as a green city. Rightly so, some say – whereas others think that there's always room for improvement. Landscape architects and planners are in the latter camp. And so 2011, Hamburg's year as European Green Capital, could not pass without a major drive for urban green in the city. A major supporter of this was the Department for Regional and Landscape Planning.

The success of the 'My tree – My city' campaign is due in part to the many key players in politics and administration, but mostly it is thanks to the involvement of the people of Hamburg. In 2011 the city made an additional investment of more than two million euros to fill the gaps in the streets left from felling trees in past years. There is no doubt that without the citizens' donations we would not have been able to plant 2,639 street trees.

Although Hamburg had invested a lot of money in trees and their maintenance over the years, there were many gaps in the city's tree stock. However, the budget funds were insufficient to replace trees that needed to be felled as a result of disease or because they were unstable.

The 'My tree – My city' campaign therefore seemed an obvious option. However, it also entailed a certain element of risk: would the people of Hamburg agree to donate money for something that was really the responsibility of the administration, the city and, therefore, a political matter? The result speaks for itself.

Certainly the information campaign that was supported by the media and many professionals helped a lot. We tried to explain the complexity of the task and the responsible use of tax money, but we also needed to highlight the deficits that led to the considerable loss of street trees over the years. However, the will and desire of the citizens to support their city and play a part in its appearance also played a big part in this. The campaign's success means that the city's planners and gardeners now have an obligation and the motivation to maintain and develop Hamburg's existing street trees at the highest standard. Even when funds are sparse, our politicians should feel encouraged to keep Hamburg green and to continue to listen to people's wishes in the future. The budget increase of 500,000 euros for new tree planting starting in 2011 raises our hopes.

Hans Gabányi

Hans Gabányi was head of the Department for Regional and Landscape Planning at the Ministry for Urban Development and Environment during the campaign. He is a qualified landscape planner and also has a law degree. Hans Gabányi was significantly involved in the so-called donations mechanics, i.e. in working out the details of the campaign.



Many of Hamburg's existing street trees were gone. 2011 saw a major replanting effort. The city also attaches much importance to green spaces in its new urban neighbourhoods such as HafenCity (the image shows Marco-Polo-Terrassen).

## ... whose idea was it anyway?

The origins of the campaign

It was tough. For years I was inundated with enquiries from the media at the end of each felling season. The papers were full of stories about trees being cut down, and it all culminated in Germany's largest tabloid, printing pictures of children posing accusingly on the stumps of felled trees. For years we were also tormented by opposition politicians who sent us reams of questions about tree felling which could keep our department from doing its work for weeks at a time, but did not help plant a single tree. This created a lasting impression that the city was felling its trees – but replanting only very few if any.

Actually, Hamburg is really good about its street trees – after all, we have Gerhard Doobe. He introduced the computer tree check, which is the envy of many cities. He established a digital tree inventory that lists and briefly describes every tree in every street. When we surveyed the street trees more than 15 years ago, we soon realised that many were in dire need of treatment if they were to survive.

Part of the problem of street trees in Hamburg is related to the city's history. In the 1960s and 1970s 150,000 trees were indiscriminately planted along the streets. This was more than half the number of street trees in Hamburg today. The girls and boys in the parks departments wanted to make Hamburg green again after the war. But planting trees 'willy-nilly' risks that limes, oaks and horse chestnuts are planted in places where one wouldn't ordinarily think of sticking a shrub.

The street tree as a symbol for the environment and sustainability in cities.

Streets are always an environment that is hostile to trees, most of which suffer damage from collisions, compacted soil, diseases and pests. The impact does not show for years, sometimes decades. These are the trees, in these positions, that form the focus of our treatment programme.

Barely any of the numerous felled trees were replaced in the past ten years, so it was high time to launch a full-size rescue mission: a campaign to fill every gap in Hamburg's stock of street trees in one fell swoop. Then there arose a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity: Hamburg became European Green Capital 2011!

On a wet and cold morning in March 2011 we met, almost conspiratorially, to launch the great plan. Only three-quarters of an hour and five napkins-full of notes later we had come up with the solution; 'My tree – My city' – the name came later, but the idea was born; starting in the autumn, Hamburg, the Green Capital, would replant all the street trees that had been felled and not replaced in the last ten years – around 2,600 trees.

We considered the street tree the perfect symbol for the environment and sustainability in cities, and therefore hoped that we would find acceptance, funds and dedicated partners. During the press conference of 29 June 2011, we introduced them, starting with the districts which would be instrumental in implementing the campaign and carrying out the actual work. They know precisely why what tree should be planted and where. They also know precisely the problems of each site. And they know precisely which citizen would be keeping a particularly beady eye on which tree.



People in Hamburg wanted to pitch in as well as donate money. From left: 'Alsterfrösche', the Turkish community Hamburg Umgebung, the campaign launch in Grindel neighbourhood and a sought-after interview partner, Mayor Olaf Scholz.

At the start of the planting campaign in October, we asked the entire Senate of Hamburg to pose for photographs. A few days later the Mayor Olaf Scholz planted the first tree. This was followed by planting in the districts – a logistic masterstroke, unprecedented anywhere in Germany. The last tree was planted on 26 January 2012, only four days before the high pressure area known as 'Dieter' turned Central and Eastern Europe into an icebox.

Remarkable was people's willingness to donate money. What we had wished for on that March morning, but had never dared to say out loud, came true; the donations poured in, exceeding first the 100,000 mark, then the 200,000 mark and, at the end of December, the 300,000 mark. This allowed the city to fill every gap along its streets, with a public whose participation exceeded all expectations.

The most astonishing aspect of the campaign, however, was the people of Hamburg themselves. They practically fought for THEIR tree in THEIR street in front of THEIR home – I had never, ever seen anything like it before.

The message behind this endeavour is the campaign's cherry on the cake: people in our city are dedicated to THEIR tree, to their neighbourhood. They really care about their city. They want to be responsible for the appearance of their environment. Democracy is coming of age.

Volker Dumann



During the campaign Volker Dumann was press officer for the Ministry of Urban Development and Environment in Hamburg. It was his idea – “... fancy a coffee, Doobe?” – that led to the plan for ‘My tree – My city’ being hatched, refined and given a slogan. Dumann has the gift of enthusing people, just like Gerhard Doobe. Together they are an almost invincible team. Volker Dumann is presently travelling Australia in a camper van for a year.



The logistics behind planting 2,639 trees in only three months is a logistic masterstroke, only achievable with excellent teamwork.



The donors' plaque in front of Hamburg's town hall will now travel to the districts.

## So much for Northern German reserve?

Citizens and partners put their heart and soul into the project

Hamburg was European Green Capital 2011, which is why we launched the 'My tree – My city' campaign in 2011 and not later, and thereby enthused hundreds of tree donors who got involved and proved to be exemplary green citizens. Our highly motivated colleagues from Hamburg's districts were behind them. The close collaboration between the districts and the Ministry for Urban Development and Environment has nurtured a team spirit that for several years supported this campaign and enabled its implementation on such a large scale.

The campaign also owes its success to its strategic partners, the Loki Schmidt Stiftung Naturschutz Hamburg (Loki Schmidt Foundation for Nature Conservation Hamburg), the Volksbank, and the *Hamburger Abendblatt* newspaper. Viewed in retrospect, the enthusiasm with which the Loki Schmidt Foundation looked after and advised citizens is one of the milestones that led to success. The same can be said for the *Hamburger Abendblatt*: its coverage allowed many people to participate in the campaign's many facets.

Let's not forget the website. Originally conceived to overcome staff shortages and intended as a lifeline for communicating with Hamburg's citizens, the website soon became the hub of the campaign. It was based on a computer application that was

developed together with the makers of Hamburg's geoVAL tree inventory, which allowed us and the districts to monitor the progress of the project for each site from start to finish. This provided the basis on which we, together with the Landesamt für Geoinformation und Vermessung (Agency for Geo-information and Surveying), developed an interactive map ([www.meinbaum-meinestadt.de](http://www.meinbaum-meinestadt.de)). Hamburg's residents were able to use this map to choose a planting space and the tree species they wished to donate.

The campaign's principle was simple: for every 500 euros donated by a citizen, the city would give another 500 and plant a tree. Within a few weeks of the start of the campaign in late June it was clear that people in Hamburg are nuts about trees. By mid-August they had already donated more than 150,000 euros. On its own, this sum was sufficient to plant 300 citizen trees. Surprisingly, the money did not arrive in dribs and drabs of micro-donations, but mostly came in as full 500 euro donations with requests for 'a tree of my own' to be planted for Hamburg.

There was a brochure with information for people without internet access. This 'tree book' listed all the gaps in the city's tree stock, arranged by the seven districts and alphabetically by street name. All locations

for which sufficient donations had been received were marked; key maps helped people to find their way around. The brochure was only a snapshot and donors had to check that their desired site was still available, but many telephone conversations, mainly with older citizens, left no doubt that the printed version was an essential complement to the website.

The first tree was planted in mid-October 2011 in the Grindel neighbourhood district with the participation of Mayor Olaf Scholz and Jutta Blankau, Senator for Urban Development and Environment. A neighbourhood fete, organised by 600 local residents and businesspeople, had raised money for new street trees in their district.

People were able to monitor the progress of planting on online maps. Donors were given the opportunity to wield the spade themselves and plant their own tree, which gave rise to quite a number of stories; like the elderly lady of very modest means in the Uhlenhorst district who, for once in her life, was going to treat herself to ... a tree. She even came to the unveiling of the donors' plaque.

One evening in the late winter of 2011, people from all kinds of different backgrounds gathered around the perspex column engraved with the donors' names in Hamburg's Rathausmarkt square. They



Online maps showed the gaps in the existing tree cover, the kind of tree that should be planted there, and the amount of money donated.

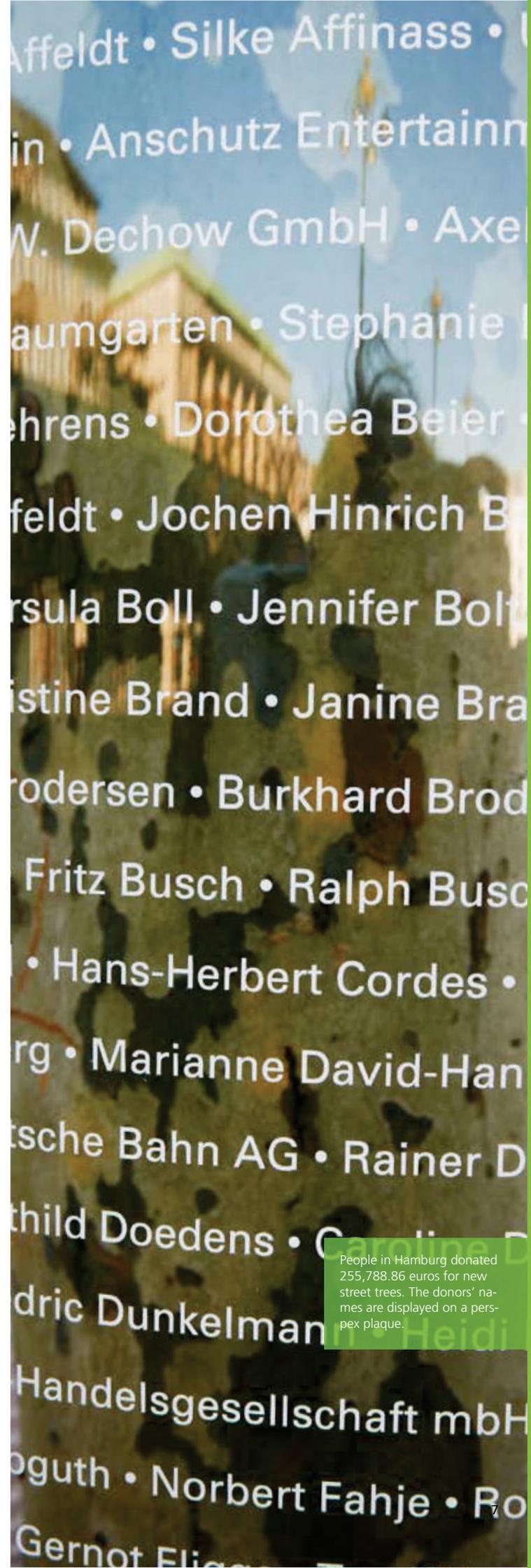
stood by it and talked animatedly about the campaign. They had come to this column from all parts of the city. The opportunity to see their own names exhibited in front of the town hall lured the staid citizens out of their houses. Quite something in this city, imputed for its northern reserve. Deep down, however, Hamburg's citizens have a big heart and care deeply about their city.

The perspex donors' plaque in front of the town hall will now be taken on a tour of the districts, where it will again attract people who desire to satisfy themselves that they were indeed 'a part of it'. Thank you!

Gerhard Doobe, Volker Dumann

Gerhard Doobe created and coordinated the campaign. He is an ideas man, incentiviser, motivator, coordinator, workhorse, passionate biologist, and one of Germany's leading tree experts.

During the campaign Volker Dumann was press officer for the Ministry of Urban Development and Environment in Hamburg. It was his idea – "… fancy a coffee, Doobe?" – that led to the plan for 'My tree – My city' being hatched, refined and given a slogan. Dumann has the gift of enthusing people, just like Gerhard Doobe. Together they are an almost invincible team. Volker Dumann is presently travelling Australia in a camper van for a year.



People in Hamburg donated 255,788.86 euros for new street trees. The donors' names are displayed on a perspex plaque.

## Hamburg lavishes care on its trees

Tree inventories, Hamburg's tree pruning techniques and the ion-exchange process

Hamburg has around 245,000 street trees which were estimated to be worth one billion euros in 2005. Additionally, there are 600,000 trees in public green spaces. To safeguard their care and maintenance, the city developed new and improved control mechanisms and working methods. Trees need to be checked regularly to ensure that they are safe, and tree inspectors examine crowns, trunks and root areas for damage. They use checklists to decide on maintenance and safeguarding measures, and the date for the next check. A digital tree inventory, first introduced in Hamburg in 1998, has been supporting this new monitoring method.

The tree inventory was developed by external computer consultants under the management of the Ministry of Urban Development and the Environment in cooperation with Hamburg's districts. It records the development of the tree stock and the results of regular inspections. The automated evaluation of this data allows the districts to make targeted plans of action as well as allocate staff and resources. Moreover, they can be used for comprehensive studies on diseases and pests, exposure to de-icing salt, treatment options and site improvements. Hamburg's tree inventory was also a mainstay of the 'My tree – My city' campaign.

Hamburg's tree inventory is a mainstay of the campaign.

Efficient pentop computers, which are operated with a pen rather than a keyboard and mouse, have been used by tree inspectors since July 1999 and allow data to be entered while on site. One year later, a comprehensive health-check for trees was launched. Presently Hamburg has 80 stationary and another 40 mobile staff working on tree inspections. Many cities, from Kiel to Zurich, now use Hamburg's tree inventory system to manage their trees and perform mandatory inspections. Hamburg also advises cities and municipalities on how to organise tree inspections and use tree inventories.

Hamburg does even more for its trees: the 'Hamburg pruning technique' has replaced the lopping and chopping methods that had previously been detrimental to the trees.

For the past five years the city, together with its waste management services, has been examining the impact of de-icing salt on soils and trees. Hamburg had already developed an ion-exchange process that enables tree sites damaged by de-icing salt to be gently regenerated.

Since 2001, Hamburg's elm programme has been giving this endangered tree species a chance of survival. Serial vaccination against Dutch elm disease is an important element in the programme.

Hamburg's residents are also very fond of their horse chestnuts: the city has been taking action against the horse chestnut leaf miner by carrying out trials using tree plasters and stem injections on infected trees. A summary of the findings of the Hamburg-CAMeraria project on the biology of the pest, which was conducted in conjunction with the University of Hamburg, was included in an educational film produced by IWF Wissen und Medien (knowledge and media). In the context of civic participation, the city used this information to produce a 'recipe book for horse chestnut savers' that was distributed to all of Hamburg's primary and secondary schools.

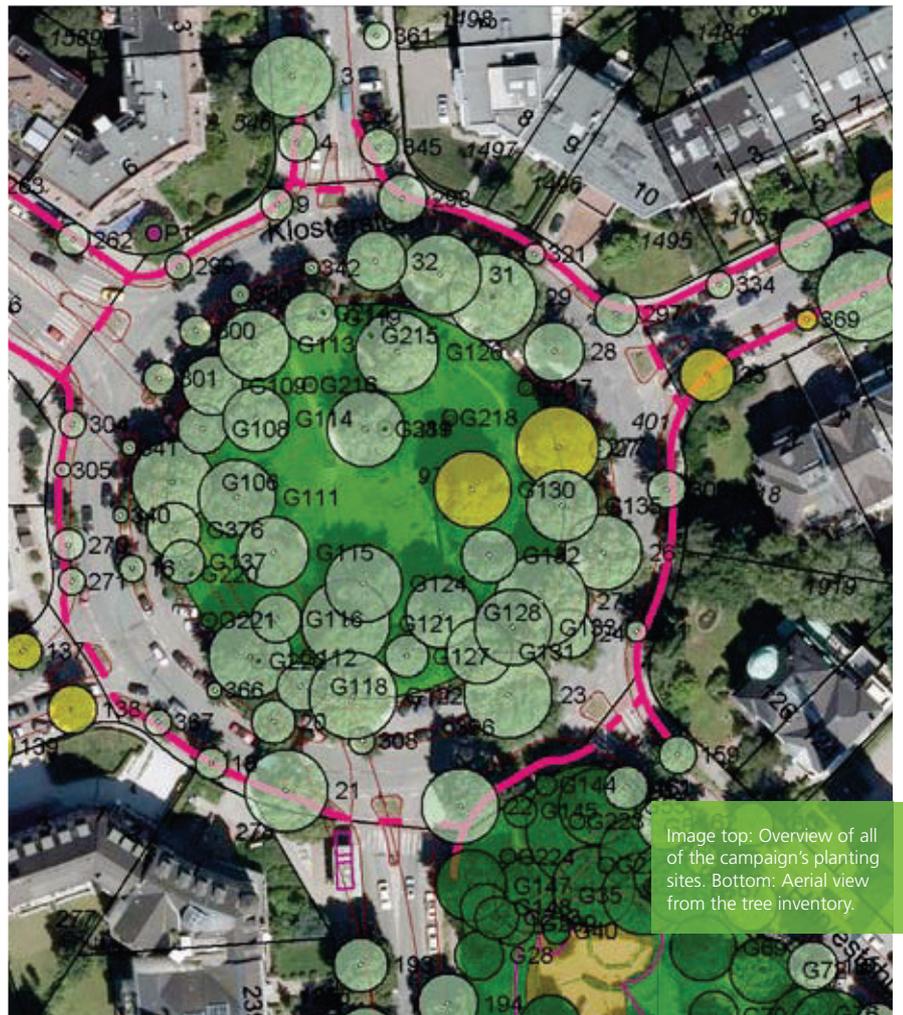
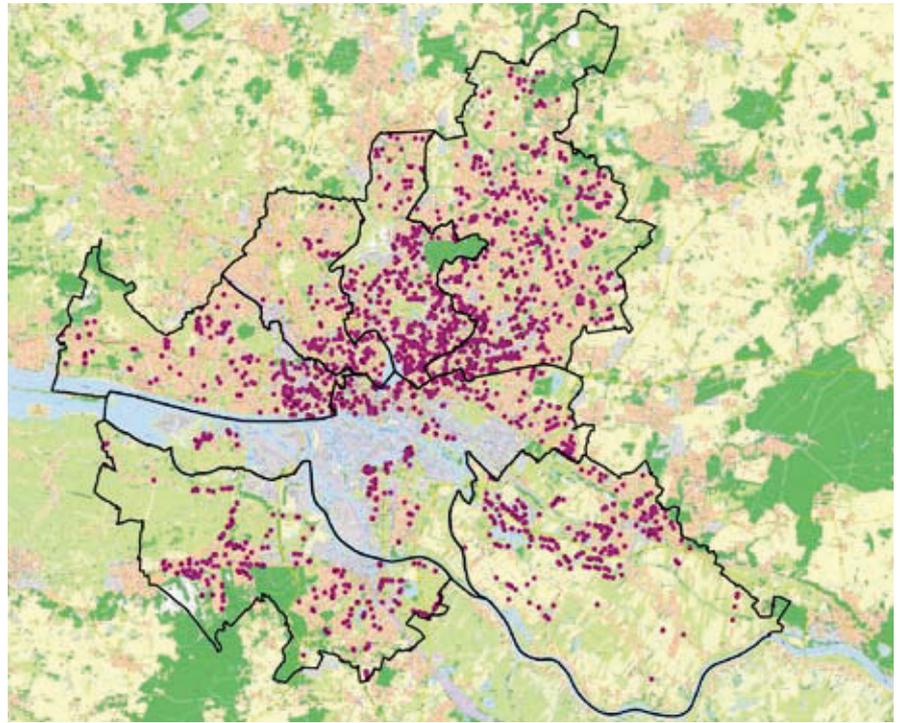
The tree inspection method that was developed in Hamburg in 2000 formed the subject of a textbook published in 2004 by the Ministry of Urban Development and Environment. That same year this method was used as the basis for national tree inspection guidelines for the purpose of the legal duty to maintain safety.

Hamburg is involved in the national 'GALK-Straßenbaumtest' (street tree trial by the Heads of German Parks Departments Conference) ([www.galk.de](http://www.galk.de)), and since 2005 the city has been planting new tree species along its roads and assessing their suitability for certain sites.

Gerhard Doobe

The city and its university are studying the biology of the horse chestnut leaf miner within the scope of the Hamburg CAMeraria project.





It is hoped that vaccinations will make elm more resilient against Dutch elm disease.



Image top: Overview of all of the campaign's planting sites. Bottom: Aerial view from the tree inventory.

## Not all trees are equal

Quality management starts with the selection of trees

Major projects like 'My tree – My city' require a quality management system that goes beyond the scope of 'ordinary' projects. The timely delivering and planting of a large number of trees that meet the specified quality requirements is no small matter, and requires careful planning. The solution: a good quality assurance system.

Public clients are obliged to put planting work and plant procurement contracts out to tender, and often these tender processes even have to be open across Europe. The contractual basis for the works is always provided by the quality standards issued by the Forschungsgesellschaft Landschaftsentwicklung Landschaftsbau, which describe the inner and outer quality criteria for trees and shrubs. Quality assurance guarantees trouble-free processes and avoids supply shortages, replacements and incorrect deliveries. In the additional technical contract terms the client may directly influence the quality of the specified trees.

In view of the 2,600 trees of different species for individual positions that were ordered for the Hamburg planting campaign, the quality descriptions of the trees needed to be clearly differentiated at the specification stage because they must correspond with the tree nursery catalogues.

Example: Norway maples with girths of 20 to 25 centimetres are available as trees that have been transplanted three times or four times. To ensure that the correct size is ordered, the specification needs to be expertly worded. One can either specify a three times transplanted tree with a girth of 18 to 20 centimetres or a four times transplanted tree with a girth of 20 to 25 centimetres. The two different sizes are clearly distinguishable and can be checked easily.

One of the quality assurance criteria asks tenderers to state in their bid the production areas or delivery nursery for semi-mature trees. The companies must therefore ensure they have detailed knowledge about the plants' point of origin and availability on the free market at the time of submitting the bid. This is to prevent bogus bids. In the event that information is missing, such tenders can be excluded from the assessment process. After the tenders have been evaluated the source of the plants is fixed. Clients or their expert representatives are then able to check the quality at the nurseries – this is a part of the quality assurance system.

Before the trees were delivered to Hamburg, nurseries across half of Europe were visited. Since single nurseries do not generally grow

all plants themselves but buy in additional stock, trees were also inspected at the upstream supplier. The key criteria that needed to be checked were whether plants were true to species, the number of times they had been transplanted, whether the maximum length of time in one production field had been exceeded, the clear stem heights, whether spacings in the fields were sufficient or insufficient, and whether crown structures were species-appropriate. Another important aspect was the availability of the required quantities. If the criteria had been met, each individual tree was given a seal. These seals ensured that only those trees that had been selected were delivered.

In response to the great interest shown in the project by the district officers, the Ministry of Urban Development and the Environment is planning to hold a follow-up workshop during which the requirement criteria will be developed further and standard specification documents produced for Hamburg.

Leander Wilhelm

Quality assurance guarantees trouble-free processes.



The tree expert Leander Wilhelm explains at the nursery which of the quality standards are the most important.

You couldn't find anyone more gnarled or Bavarian than Leander Wilhelm. He is reputed to be the tree expert in Germany par excellence. Appropriately, the campaign collaborators concentrated and listened attentively when he lectured, in filthy weather at a nursery at the city's periphery, about the important quality criteria of trees for planting. Leander Wilhelm's contribution to the project was that the ordered trees actually delivered to the specified standard. For this he travelled half of Europe and tagged trees with a seal.



The seal confirmed: this tree is going to Hamburg to be planted in the course of the 'My tree – My city' campaign.



At first glance all these trees look the same. That's why it is important to assess every single tree.

## Grindel goes green

Joining forces for more trees



Raising money together, planting together, celebrating together – that's what mattered to the residents of Grindel neighbourhood.

Grindel Goes Green is an association of sustainability-minded businesspeople in the Grindel neighbourhood of Hamburg's Rotherbaum district. We are united by the desire to protect our environment for our children. When we heard about the 'My tree – My city' campaign, we pondered how best to support it and collect money for trees to fill the gaps in the Grindel neighbourhood. The solution was a raffle. All the residents could buy tickets and so participate in the campaign. We wanted it to become a joint initiative of all the Grindel neighbourhood residents.

This is because we believe it is important that all citizens take an active role within their own sphere of influence and help shape their own environment. Every time I look out of my office window and see the tree that I helped to plant I experience the same rush of delight. I used to notice the gaps in the street trees in our neighbourhood every day. Thanks to our campaign, we were able to fill the six gaps with new trees. They are still quite small, but the children in our neighbourhood will witness these young plants growing into magnificent trees in the coming years and decades.

We found that the Ministry for Urban Development and Environment had given a lot of thought to finding suitable trees for specific locations. As a result, three oak-leaved rowans were planted in Rappstraße and so almost completed the uniform planting along the street.

For me and my quality of life, cities need to be as green as possible. For instance, in Vancouver there are hardly any trees. I wouldn't want to live there. Particularly in view of the anticipated extreme weather conditions I find it important to make sure that cities have a balancing microclimate.

We wanted all donations for our trees to be raised in a joint action by all residents in the Grindel neighbourhood.

For us businesspeople and residents of the Grindel neighbourhood, this campaign is a great opportunity to help shape our environment. We the citizens need only make use of this freedom to actively participate, and contribute in accordance with our own ability. I also think it is important that we are role models in everything we do. We can live our lives in a way that demonstrates how to create a good environment for ourselves and our children. Maybe we can inspire one or two people who will then initiate similar actions in their areas.

Anne Südekum

Anne Südekum came to the attention of the campaign organisers as a result of her exceptional commitment to replanting a large number of trees in her neighbourhood. She works in a long-established and renowned organic bakery. At a neighbourhood festival, co-initiated by her, she and her fellow campaigners persuaded more than 600 people to make donations. Thanks to her contribution almost all of the gaps in Grindel neighbourhood were planted with trees at the end of the campaign.

# Communicating directly with the donors

The Loki Schmidt Foundation's fund raising experts

The Loki Schmidt Stiftung Naturschutz Hamburg (Loki Schmidt Nature Conservation Foundation) carefully selects all the projects it participates in. Joining the 'My tree – My city' campaign was not a difficult decision. The objective of bringing nature into the city by planting new trees is consistent with both Loki Schmidt's (1919-2010) values and the foundation's basic principles. Another aspect that corresponds with Loki Schmidt's ideas is the concept of people donating a specific tree and thereby taking on responsibility. 'My tree – My city' fosters a relationship between donors and their tree, between people and nature. This was one of Loki Schmidt's issues when she was still a primary school teacher; and this is what she advocated all her life through her foundation, which is also Hamburg's regional nature conservation foundation (Stiftung Naturschutz Hamburg).

Trees form part of our natural environment. They clean our air, supply us with oxygen, are good for the soil and the groundwater and provide habitats for birds and insects. For people living in cities they can be the last remnant of nature they have left. Trees in cities are often the object of conflict. Time and again they are felled for building developments or fall

victim to their often hostile living conditions, for instance on roadsides.

The foundation supported 'My tree – My city' with their expert knowledge and logistic know-how. In addition to processing donations, it worked closely with cooperation partners, advised donors and supported the Ministry's public relations work.

During the intensive work with the donors it became clear how much Hamburg's citizens value the trees in their city. Many were overjoyed to be able to donate a tree to be planted in front of their homes, in their street, at their place of work or another spot in their lives. Not surprisingly their interest extended to details about the time of planting, tree species and many other aspects. Often the trees were presents for special occasions, such as birthdays or anniversaries. They came with individually worded certificates that were prepared in cooperation with the donors. One member of staff at the foundation was kept busy simply answering the numerous telephone calls and emails, and writing donation certificates and donation receipts.



Most of the donors had no particular links to nature conservation. Rather they identified with their (more or less) green housing and living environment, and wanted to contribute to its regeneration and improvement.

And they wanted their contribution to be as tangible as possible.

The contact with donors has also helped to raise the Loki Schmidt Foundation's profile. We are proud to be partners in this project. The campaign will benefit the city and its citizens.

Axel Jahn

Axel Jahn is CEO of Stiftung Naturschutz Hamburg (Nature Conservation Foundation) and Loki Schmidt Stiftung (Loki Schmidt Foundation). The Foundation coordinated and managed the receipt of donations. The main task was to record incoming donations and update accounts on a daily basis because they needed to be synchronised with the availability of tree sites on the website.



'My tree – My city' captivated people in Hamburg. They wanted to donate money for their tree, in their street, in their city.

## In focus: cooperation

Implementing the project in the districts

In mid-May 2011 I was invited to participate in the task force ‚Pflanzaktion 2011‘ (Planting action 2011) in my capacity as head of the section for street trees and roadside planting at the Department of Urban Green in the district Hamburg Nord. There was only one topic on the agenda: ‚My tree – My city‘. I was aware of the scale of the project, but could not fathom how it would be possible, in a single project, to plant so many trees all over the entire city.

Initially it seemed illusory to me that we, in collaboration with the Ministry of Urban Development and Environment, would be able to shift this mountain of work on a narrow budget. With the help of the tree inventory we soon learned how many trees were missing. In the Hamburg Nord district it was no fewer than 378. To replace them with new trees seemed extremely ambitious in view of the tight time schedule.

A bulging file with detailed maps wedged under my arm, I set off for the meeting. My initial scepticism quickly turned to elation when I heard that Hamburg’s citizens were to be involved. However, the extra work had to be accommodated in our day-to-day routine. Specifications had to be drafted within a short time. The tree inspectors had to examine the feasibility of the sites, digging permits needed to be applied for and each site examined for weapons or rather ammunition remnants and unexploded ordnance from the Second World War. Given the number of sites, this took up the great-

est amount of the time. A specialist explosive ordnance disposal firm probed the soil in the critical locations, while stumps were cleared and tree pits dug. Not a single site had to be abandoned because of unexploded ordnance; and none of our colleagues came to harm during the work.

The feedback from people in Hamburg and their willingness to give were overwhelming. After a while we even had to turn down donations for trees in specific districts and streets. In Hamburg Nord there are neighbourhoods where all the trees were financed by donations. However, my persuasive powers did not always succeed in convincing donors to support other neighbourhoods. I do understand that they wanted to see ‚their‘ tree thriving in their area.

I admit that in the beginning I was sceptical about people’s willingness to donate. However, at that time we could not have anticipated the fantastic support we were to receive. There was the web page where one could take a virtual walk through the streets of Hamburg and select from possible sites and tree species specified by us. The Ministry also allocated additional members of staff to support the project and help communicate with potential donors, so that the district could concentrate fully on its implementation.

The initial fear that most of the work would land on the desk of the district was unfounded. It was a joint effort all the way

and the project was launched on 25 October 2011. Each member of the Senate presented ‚their‘ tree on Rathausmarkt in front of the town hall. These trees were planted immediately after the press conference had taken place. The preparations on Rathausmarkt started before sunrise early in the morning of 25 October.

We planted all the trees in less than three weeks. Naturally, many of the donors wanted to be present when ‚their tree‘ was planted. Long after the end of the planting season people were still ringing me wanting to donate a tree for the district and asking for the project to be continued in 2012. For me this was an utterly unexpected conclusion to the campaign.

I am sure that the immense interest and people’s willingness to give has raised awareness for street trees and green spaces in Hamburg. One of the project’s positive spin-offs is that already citizens are more aware of the manifold problems facing street trees in a city like Hamburg.

Andreas Schoof

If passion in the district of Hamburg Nord had a name, it would be called Andreas Schoof. Schoof works for the department that manages public open spaces, where his responsibilities include the maintenance of urban green. His enthusiasm for the campaign grew with the continuously increasing number of donations. Planting almost 400 trees in the Nord district alone ceased feeling like work, and instead became a challenge; particularly because there were only a few weeks in which to do the job.



The campaign was launched on 25 October 2011. Each member of the Senate presented his tree in front of the town hall.

# I'm an ash tree

Public relations work for 'My tree – My city'



The news from London was discouraging; the Guinness World Records office had informed us that Pakistan holds the world record for tree planting: 541,176 were planted within 24 hours. Our 1,000 seem negligible in comparison. Not every PR idea is viable and, given the limited chances of success, the 'My tree – My city' campaign was not entered to compete for a world record.

However, there was much else that did have record-breaking potential: the public relations concept for the whole campaign was developed and put into practice within a week, including all texts, flyers, web pages and everything else that went with it. The gusto everyone put into their work could also have broken records. The staff at the Ministry of Urban Development and Environment and at all the other public authorities, agencies, district authorities, the teams at Green Capital and the Loki Schmidt Foundation, and our extremely committed media partner, the daily paper *Hamburger Abendblatt*; everyone joined forces for a good cause, and gave up many evenings and weekends.

The media had a problem; there were good ideas, there were events, but not a single tree in sight. "If you want to start the campaign in June – why plant in the winter? That's bad, no pictures!", one of the journalists asked at the start of the campaign. He was duly treated to an extra lesson in botany and the cycle of the seasons – and he reported in great detail.

One celebrity also became the 'recipient' of a donation: three trees in the Kiez area were dedicated to ex-Beatle Ringo Starr. We were particularly taken with the matter-of-course way people in Hamburg embraced the campaign. There wasn't an occasion that could not be exploited for a tree donation; weddings, birthdays, anniversaries and inaugurations all provided good excuses.

Consequently it was no problem to put into practice our idea of persuading four carefully chosen young and older people from Hamburg to make a pledge for 'their' tree. An IT entrepreneur, a schoolgirl, a mother and her baby, and a successful textile designer posed for pictures. Printed on thousands of free postcards, their portraits and avowals were distributed in Hamburg's trendy bars. The firm that distributed the cards reported back at the end that they had gone quicker than any others in that year.

When we were sure that donations would cover the tree planting, the focus shifted to communicating the value of trees to people and to the environment. As language purists, our work normally involves struggling with endless compound words such as 'Straßenbegleitgrün' (roadside planting) and 'Lichtraumprofil' (overhead clearance), but we were amazed at the effort it takes to ensure the survival of the 200,000 trees in an often inhospitable environment. This is what we communicated to people in addition to telling them about how trees contribute to cleaning our air or providing habitats for small creatures.

What will persist? Definitely a commitment by Hamburg's citizens to their city and to their trees, to more trees. And a large, transparent, movable column with the names of the donors who gave their permission to be identified. And, we hope, our tree – a common lime on the meadow in front of BallinStadt.

The fact that we didn't make the Guinness world record has not spoiled our mood because we know what everyone involved in the 'My tree – My city' campaign accomplished. Anyway, it wasn't trees the Pakistanis planted in July 2009, but mangrove seedlings.

Ludwig Rademacher

Ludwig Rademacher runs the BKM agency, jointly with Thomas Immisch. They looked after the campaign and their ideas and concepts gave it the necessary pizzazz. These greying eminences know most of the tricks in the book, and brought with them a huge amount of experience in dealing with the media and people. Their campaign proposal stood head and shoulders above those of their competitors.

## The planting continues

Senate provides 500,000 euros for new trees

The Ministry of Urban Development and Environment and Hamburg's district authorities agree: the people of Hamburg are passionate about their trees. They enjoy being involved with their trees. They have set a clear signal that the campaign should continue. So this year 'My tree – My city. Count me in!' will run again. The kick-off has been provided by a large donation from the Verband der norddeutschen Wohnungsunternehmen e.V. (Association of North German Housing Companies).

No fewer than 50 new trees will be planted with the money donated by the association. The first tree, a birch, was planted on 3 April 2012 in Akazienallee in Hamburg's Fuhlsbüttel district. The remainder will be planted in the autumn – we hope along with many other donated trees.

The districts continue to report potential sites for tree planting to the Ministry for Urban Development and the Environment. The Ministry maintains an online location map which is a vital tool in coordinating donors and districts. The Loki Schmidt Foundation advises and looks after the donors and helps with the selection of sites. It also issues donation receipts and presents the certificates. The donation collecting process for the 2011 campaign proved excellent and consequently will be retained. Donors choose their trees from the available sites; there are no minimum donations; once 500 euros have been collected, the city pays the remaining amount and plants a tree. However, as a new development, major donors now have the choice of covering the complete cost of planting instead of making 500-euro contributions.



Around 1.8 million people live in Hamburg, Germany's second largest city which is both a city and a state. The activities on state and municipal levels are not strictly separated. Tasks that relate to the city as a whole are implemented by the Senate or transferred to the public authorities, such as the Ministry for Urban Development and the Environment. All other tasks are the responsibility of the seven districts.