

Co-creation with children in the Alnarp Landscape Laboratory

By Frederika Mårtenson & Åsa Sang Ode, SLU

The Alnarp Landscape Laboratory is a 1:1 experimental woodland at the SLU Alnarp campus in Sweden (partner in REGREEN). It is open and accessible for the general public and is often visited by schools and nurseries in the vicinity. Within an MSc thesis Josefin Ågren and Linnea Hergren explored how landscape architects can create places that contribute to children's contact with nature through the use of co-creation processes, see figure below. The process involved a school class with children aged 6 and took place over 3 months during October 2020 – January 2021. The co-creation process used as a starting point theories in environmental sciences about how children play and explore nature, where play is seen as a mean for children to understand their surroundings. Design for nature contact, therefore, means designing playscapes. Based on a literature study four factors was identified and that formed the basis for development of design principles and the co-creation process: i) stimuli of the senses, ii) freedom, iii) affordances and iv) place attachment. These factors are based on the interplay between children's nature experiences. During three different field studies, observations of the children's play in different parts of the landscape laboratory took place, identifying specific qualities and elements supporting each factor. Based on the observation evidence based design guidelines were identified and applied to the Lunden area. During a final workshop in the Alnarp Landscape Laboratory, observations of the children's interaction with the redesigned space took place, followed with a co-creation workshop with the children where the four factors were further enhanced through playful place making.



