

## Ben Wagin

Ben Wagin (1930–2021) was an art activist and nature lover – an artist who never meant to be one. He was a part of the West Berlin alternative art scene. Man's relationship to nature was a recurring theme throughout his life. He also addressed the destructive impact of wartime violence and the consequences of National Socialism. The ginkgo tree, symbolizing the hope for peace, became Ben Wagin's trademark. He planted it at many places throughout the city.



Ben Wagin  
Photo: Jürgen Hohmuth

### Contact

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### Opening Hours

April–October  
Sunday: 12 p.m.–5 p.m.  
Free admission  
The grounds are not wheelchair accessible.

### Group Tours

Tours can be booked in advance.

### Public Tours, Events and Workshops

The current program is available online.

### Public Transport

S-Bahn and U-Bahn station: Hauptbahnhof, Friedrichstraße  
U-Bahn station: Bundestag

### Imprint

Publisher: Stiftung Berliner Mauer  
[www.stiftung-berliner-mauer.de](http://www.stiftung-berliner-mauer.de)  
Photos: © Stiftung Berliner Mauer, unless otherwise stated  
Date: June 2022 – subject to change



Parlament  
der Bäume

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# Art and Nature against War and Violence







The Parliament of Trees and the shrouded Reichstag, 1995

## A Parliament against War and Violence

Artist Ben Wagin first created the Parliament of Trees in 1991 when he began planting in the former Berlin Wall border strip across from the Reichstag. The site developed into a monument against war and violence, commemorating the victims of the Berlin Wall in the center of Berlin's government district.



The Parliament of Trees 1992  
Photo: Hans W. Mende



Parliament of Trees and  
Federal Press Conference, 2005  
Photo: Olaf Gehrke

## Art, Nature and Remembrance

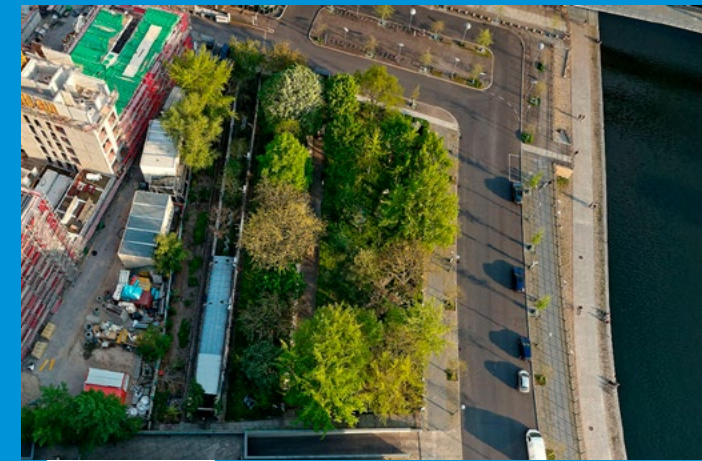
A collection of 16 trees forms the centerpiece of this 2,820 square meter memorial. The trees were planted in 1990 by the then prime ministers of the old and new federal states.

Consisting of original, painted remains of the Berlin Wall, elements of a sculpture garden, memorial stones, flower beds, as well as artistic interventions, pictures and texts, the Parliament of Trees is now a creative and open place of remembrance. Ben Wagin worked with other artists and colleagues to continually develop the area artistically. He felt that an active public discourse and gardening with children and young people were very important.

In addition to its focus on the history of the Wall and division, the Parliament of Trees also commemorates thousands of Russian soldiers who died at the end of World War II when they stormed the Reichstag on April 20, 1945 and were shot by an undetected SS unit.



Ben Wagin and Monika Grütters  
with students planting a cherry  
tree, 2021



Bird's eye view of the Parliament of Trees



Spring at the Parliament of Trees, 2022

## Development of the Site

When the Marie Elisabeth Lüders Building was erected in 2003, part of the ensemble was integrated into the new Bundestag building, while other sections had to give way to neighboring construction. In 2017, "the Parliament" in its current form was added to the State of Berlin's list of protected monuments. In June 2021, the Berlin Wall Foundation became responsible for maintaining the site. Continuing the work begun by Ben Wagin, it preserves his legacy in cooperation with the association Berliner Baumpatenverein e.V.. Events, art projects and workshops are held regularly.