

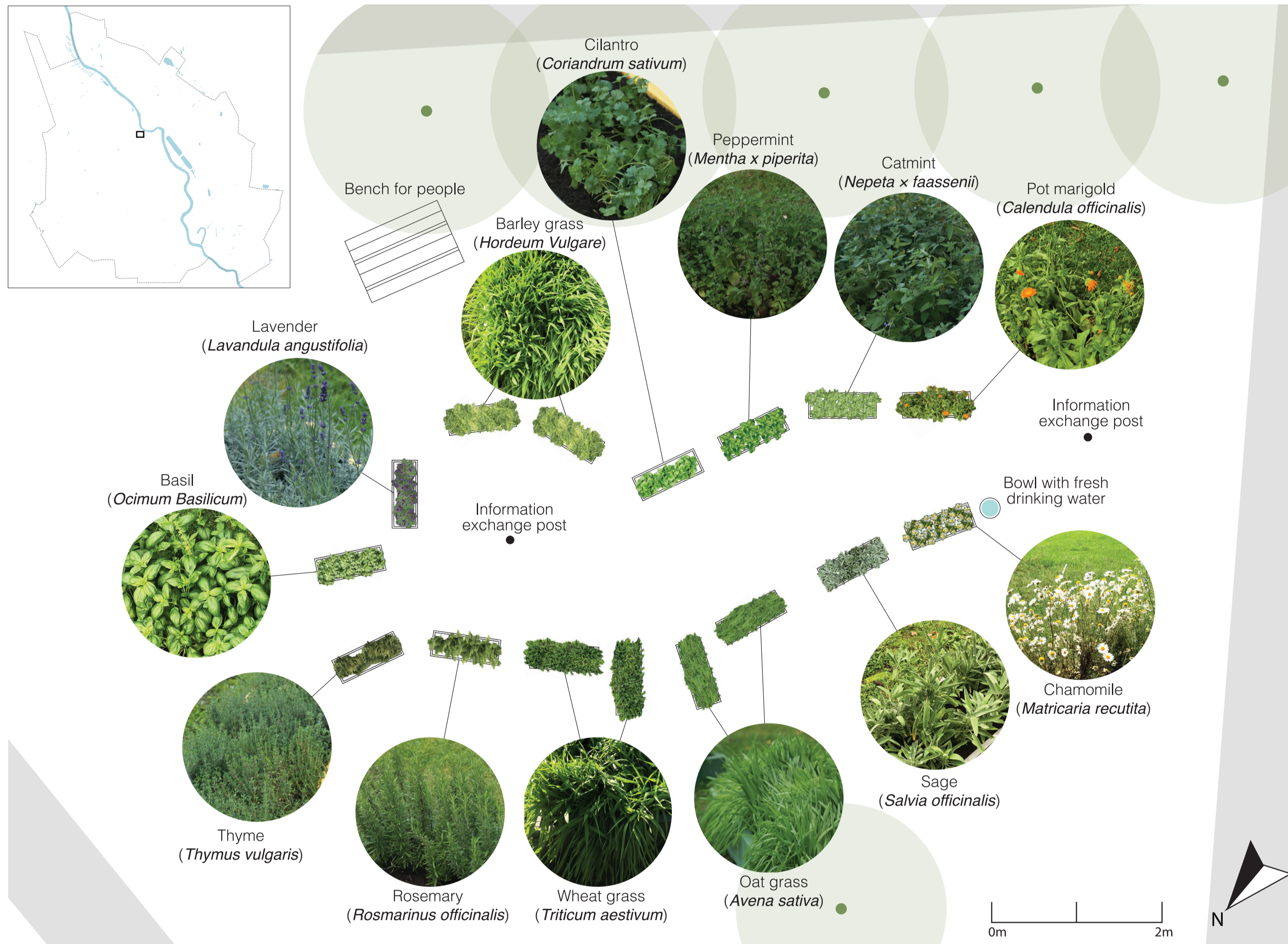
POP-UP SENSORY GARDEN / MAIKEN VARDJA / URBAN STUDIES 2020

As an extension to the empirical study I wanted to test, in a real-life situation, how interested the citizens of Tartu would be in additional functions offered in a public space for companion animals and their caregivers. I created the sensory garden "Urban Sniffari" as a part of Urban Festival UIT 2019 student installations. "Urban Sniffari" is a sensory garden prototype for companion animals and their caregivers. A sensory garden is usually in a broader sense a safe and peaceful place where humans can experience

and discover their surroundings with all of their five senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch) and this can have positive therapeutic and/or educational effects on them. In recent years the same idea has been applied to gardens made especially for companion animals. The idea of "Urban Sniffari" was that dog and cat owners can bring their animals to the garden to sniff and explore the plants and this would have positive effects on them – relaxing, stress reducing, anti-inflammatory and antispasmodic. Plants

contain essential oils that consist of various substances that can affect the receptors in the brain. These receptors, in turn, affect human and non-human animals' organ systems. For my installation I had to take into account that it is only temporary and I have to be able to set it up and take it down efficiently. Therefore, I chose one component of the sensory garden that is easily feasible – plants that can be beneficial to companion animals as well as their caregivers. At the same time, I also wanted to show that this kind

of intervention could be implemented more permanently in urban public spaces (using non-toxic plants to animals in urban landscaping). In my thesis proposal, a sensory garden can be placed as an intervention on proposed walking trajectories to create additional value for citizens and their animal companions and to diversify urban areas.



Sensory walking experience through the plant containers. On entering and leaving the area, the plants have calming effect. Inside the area some plants have medical purposes and some are for eating (grasses).



Sensory garden outcome. Consisting of 16 portable plant containers that were made of recyclable materials and coloured with water-based paints, so that they would be environmental- and animal friendly.



Over 50 citizens visited the sensory garden, most of them with their companion animals. 95% of the animals were dogs.



Common plants, such as different grasses, were also most popular among dogs.



One cat also visited the area and spent most of his time at the lavender plants.



People did not know that many of the herbs we eat, can as well be eaten by companion animals and these can be beneficial to them.



People wrote down the names and effects of the plants and also took branches and leaves with them to home to give to their animals.