

TIMES FOR REFLECTION AND ACTION

European Historic Gardens in the Face of Covid19



European Route of
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More than ever

An introductory note

Mrs. Ana Rosa Moreno

Technical Manager
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These days we can't go and visit our historic gardens, but they are still there, waiting for us. We have given them a break, so that when we finally can enjoy them again, they will shine more than ever. The trees, plants and animals in our gardens -and cities- have more space now and it's a real pleasure to observe how they enjoy that freedom. In that sense, I want to share with you two quotes, from Mr. Przybylak¹ and Mr. Valentini², respectively:

While having right now an amazing view of nature that takes a deep breath while we are actually unable to do it, is a perfect time to be honest to ourselves that nothing will be the same again. Nature brought the humankind into the corner. The sparrows are coming back the English gardens. The dolphins and fishes came back to the canals of Venice. Birds and mammals could reproduce in the closed gardens while being undisturbed by the people. Everything is so as it supposed to be always but couldn't happen in recent years because of the humankind's life dynamics (Przybylak, 2020).

In the calm imposed by the emergency, we have the opportunity of contemplating the garden, not as an expression of uncontaminated nature, but as a place of a dynamic balance, always in motion, like the branches of the same tree competing with each other to grab the best position to catch the light (Valentini, in Istituto Autonomo Villa Adriana e Villa d'Este, 2020).

These days, more than ever, we need to learn something from those extraordinary images. We are part of nature, as Mr. Clark³ observes, or users of nature, as Mrs. Drag⁴ argues, but in one case or the other, we have an obligation. We need to preserve humanity, as *part* or *user* of nature. As Mr. Clark and Mrs. Drag respectively argue:

Thus, we should not presume having to protect nature, but trying to preserve humanity in the long term in the sense of garden thinking. This includes a careful use of our resources, air, soil, water, animals and plants. However, garden thinking always includes culture and aesthetics: the combination of the useful and the beautiful (Clark, 2019).

Nature is one of the most significant Partners whose human civilization has up to now. Partnership, however - like any mutual exchange of benefits - imposes many obligations on both Partners. We -

¹ Mr. Lukasz Przybylak is the Manager of the Willanow Palace Gardens in Warsaw, member of the Scientific Committee and Vice-president of the European Network of Historic Gardens

² Mr. Valentini is the agronomist at the Istituto Autonomo Villa Adriana e Villa d'Este- Villae in in Tivoli

³ Mr. Ronald Clark is the Director of Herrenhausen Gardens, partner member of the European Network of Historic Gardens

⁴ Mrs. Monika Drag is the Manager of the Royal Palace Gardens in Warsaw, member of the Scientific Committee and member of the Board of Directors of the European Network of Historic Gardens

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as users of Nature, profit its beauty, values and indisputable benefits, but as a package of activities passed in return - we are obliged to provide Nature with fundamental factors that ensure our free use of the environment (Drag, 2020).

Our gardens are closed these days, but those who take care of them are still with them. All people involved in the maintenance and management of our gardens share the purpose to preserve them, to maintain their beauty now, so that we can enjoy it later. Gardeners are committed people that work to maintain the life of our historic gardens. As Mrs. Landi⁵ comments in a private note, we really have to thank (the gardeners) for the huge sense of care and affection to the place. We also need to appreciate and thank garden managers for their work and involvement. Managers of our gardens have also worked hard re-organizing work schedules, reducing the presence of workers in the gardens, delegating employees to work at home, re-orienting the visitors experience towards visual and virtual visits, making good use of technology and trying to keep everyone safe... but these days also mean an opportunity for managers, as Mr. Sedia⁶ and Mrs. Giusti⁷ highlight:

The period of "absence" gives us the opportunity to rethink new forms of management and protection of the historic gardens of which we take care. The artificial nature of our gardens, which are governed by Euclidean geometric order, has undergone the continuous reinterpretation of its formal characteristics and symbolic-aesthetic values. Today we need to ask ourselves about the meaning of its "continuity" by promoting policies that can anticipate and support the "continuous change" of next generations' view (Sedia, in Istituto Autonomo Villa Adriana e Villa d'Este, 2020)

The current, unexpected situation, which strongly affects the times and the modalities of our operations, takes place in years already aggravated by the altered climate conditions and it requires an approach more forcefully oriented to environmental and economic sustainability. This is an aspect that, in this phase of elaboration of our *master plan*, takes us to reflect and to see in another light our planning and management choices (Giusti, 2020)

We can't go and visit our historic gardens now, but we want you to enjoy their quietness and beauty by sharing with you [these pictures and videos](#) taken and filmed these days. In the meantime, gardens await us, and when we finally get to visit them, they will benefit us in ways we might have not appreciated before. We need to consider their important value today, more than ever. As Mr. Bruciati⁸ explains:

We are an ecosystem linked to deep and ancient roots. We consider the greenery, the open spaces and the historic garden a necessary and essential asset, also aimed at improving psychophysical well-being, as well as a value to be protected with greater attention at a time when its beauty cannot be enjoyed by the public. (Bruciati, in Istituto Autonomo Villa Adriana e Villa d'Este, 2020)

In these difficult days, we have all realized about the importance of being together and collaborating to overcome this global problem. We share the urge to think and act, more than ever. As Mr. Clark concludes in his lecture:

I conclude with a quote by Erich Kästner: "There is nothing good unless you do it". So, do not lament but do something. Small as well as big. It does not hurt to think long term and act that way. Our future generations are calling for a U-turn. Let us older people encourage them to continue to interfere, to

5 Mrs. Bianca Maria Landi is the Manager of Boboli Gardens-Uffizi Gallery and member of the Scientific Committee of the European Network of Historic Gardens

6 Mr. Fabio Sedia is Funzionario Architetto at Istituto Autonomo Villa Adriana e Villa d'Este d'Este - Villae in Tivoli (Italy)

7 Mrs. Maria Adriana Giusti (Politecnico di Torino), member of the General Board of the National Carlo Collodi Foundation and scientific manager for the Historic Garzoni Garden

8 Mr. Bruciati is the Director of Istituto Autonomo Villa Adriana e Villa d'Este - Villae in Tivoli (Italy)

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act proactively, and to take responsibility. But please not just in the interests of technical environmental protection. Because in order to stick to the image of garden acting, our world should not only function, but also be beautiful and livable (Clark, 2019)

These introductory words give way to a series of articles and lectures written by some of our garden members and members of our Scientific Committee. Their reflections on the role of historic gardens and adaptation to the present situation are enriching and inspiring for all of us.

"Historic garden maintenance vs. COVID-19 – news from the Royal Garden at Wilanów". Mr. Lukasz Przybylak, Manager of the Willanow Palace Gardens in Warsaw (Poland), partner garden of the European Network of Historic Gardens. Mr. Przybylak is a member of the Scientific Committee and Vice-president of the European Network of Historic Gardens

"Garden Allegory (Management of the Gardens of the Royal Castle in Warsaw during the COVID-19 epidemic)". Mrs. Monika Drag, Manager of the Royal Palace Gardens in Warsaw (Poland), partner garden of the European Network of Historic Gardens. Mrs. Drag is a member of the Scientific Committee and member of the Board of Directors of the European Network of Historic Gardens

"Green, Garden, Landscape: a dynamic balance to promote and protect our Heritage. Reflections and actions at the time of Covid Sars 19". Istituto Autonomo Villa Adriana e Villa d'Este in Tivoli (Italy), partner garden of the European Network of Historic Gardens

"Garden Thinking and Garden Behavior". Mr. Ronald Clark, Director of Herrenhausen Gardens in Hannover (Germany), partner garden of the European Network of Historic Gardens

"Spring 2020 at the Historic Garzoni Garden in Collodi", Mrs. Maria Adriana Giusti (Politecnico di Torino), member of the General Board of the National Carlo Collodi Foundation and scientific manager for the Historic Garzoni Garden in Collodi, (Italy) partner garden of the European Network of Historic Gardens

To be united makes more sense than ever. Let's make the best out of our union, the European Network of Historic Gardens.





Historic garden maintenance vs. COVID-19

News from the royal garden at Wilanów (Warsaw, Poland)

Mr. Lukasz Przybylak

Manager of the Willanow Palace Gardens in Warsaw (Poland), member of the Scientific Committee and Vice-president of the European Route of Historic Gardens

On Friday 13.03.2020 the polish government announced the epidemic state because of SARS-Cov-2 that causes COVID-19 disease. On 13th of March afternoon, additional precautions in the garden department were introduced. Employees and contractors that were in the high-risk group have been sent home. The work schedule had to be immediately simplified and packed into two days of work when the whole team will be on site. After that the whole team has been divided into two groups that will work in a rotary system every second day.

March is a month when the most intensive period of the garden's maintenance starts. There are things to do that have to be done to prevent the loss of plants and to minimize the risk of an early epiphytotics. First of all, we have uncovered roses and box hedges from their winter covers. We had carried out preventive actions against the box moth to preserve the structure of the baroque and eclectic parts of the garden (created mostly by the parterres, box ornaments and hedges). Because of the fact that the Wilanów District (in which the royal garden is located) had stopped their tenders for every kind of contracting works (including maintenance of the public green areas) we have decided to spray all of box bushes growing next to the garden (to prevent a possible invasion of a box moth that could come from these places).

COVID-19 appeared almost in the middle of the ornamental plant production (preparing for the summer display). The work was too much advanced to stop it without the economic loss of the institution and undermining of the greenhouse keepers' morale. That's why the ornamental plants production is still an ongoing process. As long as the situation permits the most important for the royal garden at Wilanów is to take care over the collection of exotic plants. Stories about the loss of the botanical collections, which were lost in similar situations are well known.

After two weeks of being closed for the public I have noticed that the work scheme prepared for the last two weeks of March won't be enough in April. Mostly because of a drought that we have got already in central Poland. That's why the number of gardeners that is working daily in the garden has been increased by one. To keep all of the safety standards I have kept a rotary tribe of work, so that a group of gardeners have got a stand-by day at their homes while another is in the garden and so on. To avoid the rushing hours in the public transport we have changed the time of work for 06:30 a.m. to 14:30 p.m.

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Historic garden maintenance vs. COVID-19 · **Mr. Lukasz Przybylak**

More than ever having robots in our machinery seems to be almost like a blessing. As every spring we will launch our mowing robots that will work on the most representative lawns to keep them in a right shape. It will help as usual to save time and strength of the gardeners that will work in smaller groups.

What my recommendations for the administrators of a historic gardens would be in that time is to prioritize tasks and to create a comfort of work for the employees. At the beginning, you should put aside any tasks which, if not carried out on time, will not result in a short-term with a damage to the value of the garden. Everything like for example: leaves raking, lawn mowing, topiary clipping, seasonal planting, paths weeding and raking could wait for a two or three weeks to be done (it depends of course from the time of a year in which such situation will happen).

Cut every possible expense that is not crucial for keeping the garden and the machinery safe.

Until the situation will permit it you shouldn't:

- stop taking care over the botanical collections that are in your garden,
- stop to control and to act against the animals' activity that might be harmful for the gardens (like beavers preying, for example),
- stop to control the condition of the environment (quality of surface waters, underground waters),
- stop to work in the ornamental areas of the garden (to not to lose their values and shape). Recovering an ornamental garden after pandemic might exceed the team's capacity and the budget of the institution

What I have written above might be named in four main rules:

1. Prioritize tasks in relation to the requirements and values of the garden,
2. Provide the team with safe working conditions and mental comfort,
3. Suspend any expenses which, if not implemented, will not result in the deterioration of the garden or the condition of the machinery,
4. Do not stop monitoring the environmental conditions of the garden (such as the condition and quality of surface and groundwater, the presence of epiphytoses and epizootics),

According to the current pandemic of coronavirus, the garden heritage located all over the world is facing a new factor that hits its safety and condition. Already known factors that are pushing us to redefine the term of preservation and restoration of the historic gardens are not anymore represented only by the economic, social and biological aspects. The current pandemic situation has shown another factor, another upcoming difficulty in maintaining the garden. Huge economic crisis that is hanging right now above several of the European countries will put the needs of the "green heritage" maintenance into the shadow. From the other hand the contact with nature and gardens will be extremely desired by a lot of people (because of current "self-distancing" and quarantine).

Such a combination of a great need of having a contact with the green spaces and an obvious lack of money for the "green investment" may cause a more "naturalistic" trend in restoration and maintenance of the historic gardens. For example, in such case, keeping alive a baroque garden

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that costs a horrendous amount of money and work will become once again, the same as it was after the French Revolution, financially and administratively unavailable.

Making an extract from all of the social, cultural, economic and environmental changes that have taken place in recent decades I would recommend preparing the garden heritage for the best possible archivisation. To prepare it for both, the future destruction and reconstruction that will be taken by the next generations.

While having right now an amazing view of nature that takes a deep breath while we are actually unable to do it is a perfect time to be honest to ourselves that nothing will be the same again. Nature brought the humankind into the corner. The sparrows are coming back the English gardens. The dolphins and fishes came back to the canals of Venice. Birds and mammals could reproduce in the closed gardens while being undisturbed by the people. Everything is so as it supposed to be always but couldn't happen in recent years because of the humankind's life dynamics.

"We won't find a remedy for all of changes but together we could find solutions how to adapt into them while protecting the historic garden's authenticity. And for that we need a historic gardens union. To exchange the knowledge, to share good practices in restoration, prevention and management, to interest and teach the young generations about the importance of the green heritage. The European Network of Historic Gardens was created in the best possible moment when a big question mark appeared above the future of the most beautiful gardens of Europe." – quotation from the recommendation letter for ENoHG by Łukasz Przybylak, 19.07.2019

Let's unite in the European Network for Historic Gardens to save the green legacy of Europe, to fulfill our duty of heritage's preservation and to answer for the social needs of interaction with nature and history.





Garden allegory

Management of the Gardens of the Royal Castle in Warsaw during the COVID-19 epidemic

Mrs. Monika Drag

Manager of the Royal Palace Gardens in Warsaw (Poland), member of the Scientific Committee and member of the Board of Directors of the European Route of Historic Gardens

The phenomenon of the garden lies in the fact, that it exists on a combination of art, literature, historical and religious threads, as well as prevailing fashions, customs and current situation.

After many years of non-existence, the Gardens of the Royal Castle in Warsaw were solemnly given to the public on the eleventh of May 2019. After the partitions, war damage, degradation, misunderstanding of function and meaning, they finally returned to the surroundings of the residence. Currently, they form an inseparable unity with the Royal Castle complex and no one can imagine Warsaw without the Castle rebuilt after the end of World War II, and the Castle without Gardens. The year 2019 turned out to be surprising for the reconstructed Gardens: we were visited by over 500,000 guests. The place was part of the city's identity and awareness, and became part of the country's historical and cultural heritage.

The year 2020 was to be only better. Expected to be high attendance, more events and festivities in the Gardens, expanding plant collections and equipment in the Gardens, and expanding operations in all possible fields of use. The celebration of the Gardens' first birthday after the reconstruction process is scheduled for May 9 ...

On March 12, 2020, an epidemic emergency was introduced in Poland, which on March 23, 2020 changed into an epidemic related to COVID-19 disease. The state of the epidemic has resulted in specific restrictions: the closure of museums, cultural institutions, the prohibition of movement and finally: the closure of the Gardens.

Some of the Castle employees have been delegated to work at home, which, however, for obvious reasons is not possible in the horticultural industry. The celebration of the first birthday of the gardens was canceled (mass events are prohibited). In perspective, there is a risk associated with budgeting the ongoing maintenance of the gardens in relation to the lack of money from the sale of tickets for visitors.

A group of four gardeners who has just started the basic care procedures arising from the gardening calendar has been faced with the dilemma of performing their duties, and caring for their own health and life ...

We are all aware that Nature is one of the most significant Partners whose human civilization has up to now. Partnership, however - like any mutual exchange of benefits - imposes many

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obligations on both Partners. We - as users of Nature, profit its beauty, values and indisputable benefits, but as a package of activities passed in return - we are obliged to provide Nature with fundamental factors that ensure our free use of the environment.

Gardeners have consciously chosen loneliness among garden corners ... As a group working in a large area (2.5 ha), they received guidelines that resulted in a ban on contact with other groups of employees and a kind of "quarantine" in the Castle Gardens. They changed the way to work from public transport to a bicycle or private car. *"Away from the world go forward: this is the activity of the one who is looking for himself (...) even the anxiety that no one is in front or behind or from the side, but only has an uncertain and winding path that transforms into a kind of fuller awareness of ourselves (...) in confidence that the perseverance and trust that resides in our heart will allow us to achieve peace (...)"* (P. Santarcangeli).

This decision allowed the continuation of ongoing work in the Gardens. Fortunately, the friends of the Gardens are real friends: for good and for bad. Main collaborators: a company supplying seasonal flowers (Szczepańscy Horticultural Farm) as well as company responsible for providing fertilizers and soil conditioners (Emerald) have not withdrawn from sponsorship agreements. Nowadays, when employees lose their jobs, costs are cut and opportunities to promote Partners are limited, fulfilling promises arising from partnership agreements becomes a real challenge. However, we hope that in accordance with the principle that the good returns, we will be able in the future to respond to Partners for the support and help they have shown.

Currently, the period of tulipomania begins in the Gardens of the Royal Castle in Warsaw. Over 30 thousand Tulips and seasonal plants typical of the spring are preparing for flowering. Among them, the original tulip bred specially for the Royal Castle: *'Heart of Warsaw'* (*'Serce Warszawy'*).

Cherries bloom beautifully, lawns are green.

Four robots help work on lawns, which gardeners can control from anywhere in the world with internet connectivity. After a period of spring frosts, automatic irrigation was started in Gardens. The central water control system in the Gardens turns out to be beneficial in this unique situation. Weather data adjust the amount of water fed to plants and lawns and remotely provide guidance to controllers regarding the adjustment of system capabilities to the current needs of plants. Thanks to central control, gardeners support irrigation from home or other place where there is wi-fi connection.

Thanks to modern technological solutions, working in gardens and providing basic needs for plants is possible even in the absence of gardeners directly in the gardens. This greatly facilitates the organization of work.

It is amazing that despite the fact that the Gardens are closed, the community is very interested in what is happening there. Posts on social media, photographic reports or short videos (shot even by gardeners) enjoy high activity of recipients representing various social groups.

It turns out that the garden is not only a masterpiece - it is also an idea, a concept found somewhere at the bottom of the collective subconscious. In my perspective, the action # stay in the home raises a duty for us as guardians of historical gardens - people stimulating national identity, unity and strength that lies in society as a community representing common values: taking care of yourself and others, taking care of health and ensuring mental comfort. Reminding about the

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strength that lies in Nature, about the fact that man is its leading element - this is our current role and duty.

The role of the Garden in the current situation is changing: it becomes a land which, through its inaccessibility, turns into a symbol: a magical design of the world that existed, exists now and will exist and to which we as a part of it will sooner or later return.

It is confirmed that a huge role in the environment is played by the content encoded in the garden and its elements, which in the most varied form and in the most varied depth of reception constitute the essence of things we can see. It turns out that in order to possess and understand the fullness of life in relation to the garden, we do not need to see the garden "live". That it is enough to immortalize a certain fragment of the garden landscape, to properly "dress it with symbols" so that it becomes an element of hope and reason in the scattered puzzle of the present world.

The mosaic world, which is not easy to read, like floral patterns, only after a thorough analysis and recognition of individual types of flowers and forms, will they form - like in a kaleidoscope - into a perfect pattern of values, which did not fall apart in a moment of crisis. Kaleidoscopic diversity is now becoming an added value. It is only up to us whether we can see in our everyday life those values that have been built up in our resource since childhood and only matured as fruit in the sun as we grew up.

Now is the time to put values in symbols To see hope in narcissus, a new life in the insects arriving in the garden, and in the blossoming trees and singing birds a preview of a better tomorrow. Currently, the recipient of the garden - even the virtual one - has more time to search for deeper ideas, to receive what we have been transmitting for a long time. Our message becomes more understandable.

The problem in searching for the essence of the garden before the epidemic was, among other things, that the contrast between what was already known and what remained invisible (symbols) was blurred. Perhaps the degradation of the meanings of the garden was the result of the fact that we have forgotten that our entire planet is knowable and not finally known. Perhaps now each of us has found on the map of our own lives a white, uninhabited space in which we will gladly place our own idea of the magical world of historical gardens.

We should use the opportunity offered by the garden in denying the image of the real world in favor of human imagination, asking questions what is outside the garden and why there is a "fence" ...

It seems, therefore, that considering the garden a little wider than current maintenance, there is no reason to fear the disappearance of garden content in the face of the threat of an epidemic. From a private backyard patch of land with flower beds or a balcony, to a large park or historical garden, the garden continues itself based on the same fundamental meanings, which - although periodically suppressed - are always heard and understood.

Landscape design has always shown the eternal anxiety of a man facing nature. Man asks questions about his individuality and belonging to a world that surpasses him and with which no discourse is possible. Currently, gardens only change the need for tangible reception on the scenery - a material for reflection that happens in the garden as it once did.

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If we assume that the garden is an archetype emerging at the bottom of the human subconscious, we must say that it will be understood instinctively, and its content will be released spontaneously and will flourish before society with irresistible force. The essence of the garden will not die and will not require re-formulation despite the difficult situation.

However, we must know that the way to determine the meaning of the garden in the modern world may not be easy. However, our group - people who have understood this meaning and can see the importance of gardens in the *sensu stricto* - should take this path. We will probably meet as many misunderstandings as we enjoy on this path. However, leaving hope to everyone, it can certainly be said that everyone, as a society detached from the urbanized modern world, begins to hear again the life-giving speech of the ancient meanings of the garden.

I wish all of you that this "speech" evolves into a kind of dialogue that will forever build an inseparable bond regardless of the situation.

The material was created for the needs of the European Network of Historic Gardens.





Green, Garden, Landscape: a dynamic balance to promote and protect our Heritage

Reflections and actions at the time of Covid Sars 19

Mr. Andrea Bruciati

Director of Istituto Autonomo Villa Adriana e Villa d'Este - Villae in Tivoli (Italy)

The Villa Adriana and Villa d'Este - Villae Institute in Tivoli continues to investigate and take care of the green heritage, the garden and its landscape, even in these days of coronavirus lockdown in which urban parks, historical gardens and museums are closed to the public. Following government rules, efforts are being made to carry out works whose organization is intrusive for tourists visiting the site.

The Villae is an articulated institution that deals with various issues related to the landscape, posing numerous challenges, especially around its protection and promotion.

Villa d'Este represents the best example of a mannerist garden, which through the special articulation of its formal and engineering structure, anticipates baroque feelings. Perfect harmony based on rhythm, proportion and balance prevails, as reflected in the rigorous control of the geometry and coherent relationships between the individual parts (fountains, caves, nympheums, paths, inclined planes, etc), and the overall design of the garden.

In this period, we are implementing innovative and sustainable strategies for the preservation and care of our historical UNESCO heritage through an active garden maintenance and by promoting the site through our social media.

In addition to the necessary phytosanitary treatments, which are crucial for avoiding loss or permanent damages to the hedges, plants and flower collections, the Institute has carried out some environmental remediation and an extraordinary cleaning of all fountains.

However, even though the garden is closed, the fountains are still working two days a week as the water feeding them is conveyed into a historical water channel that in turn feeds the agricultural fields of the territory surrounding the villa.

In addition, an extraordinary pruning is underway to ensure the correct topiary shape of the hedges. The slowdown of grass cutting operations also allows to discover the unexpected blooms of many species such as wild orchids, *lamiums*, anemones and primroses, which the rigor of order would not allow to see. Moreover, the strength and tenacity of nature are also expressed in the small weeds on the walls such as *Cymbalaria muralis*, or in the colours of the *Cercis siliquastrum*.

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"In the calm imposed by the emergency - declares the agronomist of the Villae, Aurelio Valentini - we have the opportunity of contemplating the garden, not as an expression of uncontaminated nature, but as a place of a dynamic balance, always in motion, like the branches of the same tree competing with each other to grab the best position to catch the light. We have an idyllic idea of the garden, as a lucky, sunny, happy place, in which the primordial Eden conditions from which man was driven out are reproduced. The more wars, hunger and diseases afflict us, the more we look at the garden as a place of perfection, the result of a strenuous harmony between man and nature."

Fabio Sedia, the architect responsible of the Villae's green , notes that "the period of "absence", gives us the opportunity to rethink new forms of management and protection of the historic gardens of which we take care . The artificial nature of our gardens, which are governed by Euclidean geometric order, has undergone the continuous reinterpretation of its formal characteristics and symbolic-aesthetic values. Today we need to ask ourselves about the meaning of its "continuity" by promoting policies that can anticipate and support the "continuous change" of next generations' view. By preserving the relationships between the garden, the urban tissue and its territory, we hope for a new form of re-appropriation of these spaces as a place of collective memory, a locus rooted in the past and feeding on the present but also projected towards tradition and modernity of the future.

We have the chance, in this moment of "suspended gaze, to close our eyes and practice the memory of things by stripping away the superfluous. Our gardens may be the places where, as Calvino suggested, "the eye does not see things, but figures of things that mean other things". We are convinced that every object has its own soul and lives through our hands. Therefore some objects become our accomplices and silent travel companions who never betray us. We are an ecosystem linked to deep and ancient roots - says Andrea Bruciati, director of the Villae. -We consider the greenery, the open spaces and the historic garden a necessary and essential asset, also aimed at improving psychophysical well-being, as well as a value to be protected with greater attention at a time when its beauty cannot be enjoyed by the public. In the last years, the Institute has implemented a cultural process of recovery and reinterpretation of the landscape which today, takes on a significant symbolic connotation, as we are to rediscover the values of time and slowing down".



Garden Thinking and Garden Behavior

Inspiring thoughts in times of Covid19

Mr. Ronald Clark

Director of Herrenhausen Gardens in Hannover (Germany)

Garden Thinking and Garden Behavior. Inspiring thoughts in times of Covid19 The German term 'Garten' (garden) derives etymologically from 'Gerte' (wicker or switch). The Indo-Germanic origins are 'gher' or 'garda' and later 'Ghortos', which is related to the Latin 'hortus'. This refers to interwoven wicker, hazelnut switches, or other rods that surrounded the garden originally located near the house. The Dutch word for garden 'tuin' goes back to the Old Norse 'tún', which means fence. In Low German, fence is still called Tuun.

The underlying concept of the word 'garden' in its present form is therefore 'enclosed land for the purpose of growing plants'. The garden, like the house, was under special legal protection; there was domestic peace as well as garden peace. In the Middle Ages, cattle that broke through the garden enclosure could be killed without fine. This could also happen to people who entered the garden without permission. Today, our penalties for breaches of the garden rules are very moderate by comparison.

Although in many cultures the gardens looked very different, this protected, enclosed space can be found everywhere, whether in ancient Egypt, Japan and China, or Europe. Those who could afford it, used high walls, the others just fences and hedges. The reasons for this are on the one hand the connection to the house, and on the other the high investment in time and money making this protection worthwhile. And perhaps also the special emotional bond to this piece of land? Gardens yield large harvests on relatively small plots, which require much more manual work than in agriculture where animals have assisted for thousands of years be they horses or oxen. The industrialization of agriculture today with its huge tractors and combine harvesters has not stopped at horticulture, but for asparagus and strawberries you still have to bend down to harvest.

Due to their proximity to the house, it was mostly women who managed the gardens. Young mothers were able to work with their young children in sight and old women with their wealth of experience could still make themselves useful. My grandmother was the absolute authority in her vegetable garden; we children were only allowed to stay in it for very limited amount of time. I had to pick currants and gooseberries as they were too sour for me and I did not like them. My grandmother harvested the raspberries or strawberries herself for very good reason.

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A garden, in contrast to agriculture, usually also has aesthetic requirements. Garden culture began with the cultivation of the first flower that was not consumed. The word 'culture' comes etymologically from Latin 'colere', which refers to both soil culture and the care of body and mind. In the 20th century, the emphasis shifted towards the spiritual, but we as gardeners naturally have a holistic cultural aspiration. So let me now talk about 'garden thinking'.

Garden thinking in the strict sense means tending a garden in the long term in such a way that it yields produce in harmony with nature. The eternal cycle of growing, thriving, and decaying can only work if I take care of the soil and plants. Everything I put into a garden I get back. If I applied pesticides, I should not be surprised to find them in the harvested fruit. Mineral fertilizer emaciates the soil, reduces soil activity, and makes plants susceptible to pests and diseases, which I then have to fight again with pesticides. It is a vicious cycle. A garden cannot be managed successfully in this manner for good. This is easy to understand.

Similarly, the whole world can be considered a garden. Garden thinking in this large-scale context also means treating the natural resources with care. This idea is underlying the concept of sustainability, but thinking like a gardener is simply more. It always puts the person who cares for the garden at the center. Because a garden always implies intervention, sometimes more, sometimes less. Otherwise, it is overgrown quickly and no longer usable for humans. Moreover, a garden should always have a cultural aspiration, simply garden culture. This distinguishes garden thinking from sustainability. Sustainability often implies renunciation; I must do something "for the environment" that is not fun at all. That is why we often leave it with good intentions or postpone meaningful actions until later, often later generations. Whether climate, soil depletion, extinction of species: the knowledge is there, but let us rather close our eyes and continue with business as usual.

Is it possible that environmental protection and nature conservation also contribute to this thinking? Nature does not need protection! Nature, that is, life as a whole, still has a few billion years left. It has repeatedly recovered from major disasters, many plants and animal species such as the dinosaurs did not. Nature has only two big problems, the sun becoming a supernova and everything evaporates, or – an old joke – we stand in the way on an intergalactic highway and are just blown away. If we think that we have to protect nature, we imply that we are outside or even above nature; we are no longer part of the system.

You may know another old joke: Two Earths meet. One asks, "How are you?" "Terrible", the other one replies. "I got humans." "Oh no problem, I had them too; they pass quickly."

Thus, we should not presume having to protect nature, but trying to preserve humanity in the long term in the sense of garden thinking. This includes a careful use of our resources, air, soil, water, animals and plants. However, garden thinking always includes culture and aesthetics: the combination of the useful and the beautiful.

Let me quote Prince of Pückler-Muskau from 1834:

"Allow us to mention the beautiful here too;
for I do not see that the beautiful should be excluded from the useful.
What does useful actually mean?
Only what feeds us, warms us, protects against the weather?
Therefore these things are useful?

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Simply because they merely promote the well-being of the human race?

The beautiful elevates it to a higher dimension and therefore it is the most useful among all useful things."

Is man above nature? Often, it is referred to verse 28 from the first book of Moses: "And God blessed them, and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the world, and subdue it."

Today, this verse is often seen as evidence of all environmental problems, but it is not a license to exploit! A ruler should treat the subjects well and fairly, allow them to make a

good living and protect them from internal and external enemies. So treat them the way a gardener tends a garden. Despots exploit the land and the people, wage wars to maintain power. Eventually, most of them fall victim to their deeds; Shakespeare's dramas are full of them. If you see God as an all-encompassing gardener or people as gardeners of the Earth, we and our descendants could live on and with this Earth for a long time to come.

Preferably not only at peace with our physical surrounding, but also with the fellow human beings. A rather idealistic wish, but, as we know, hope dies last, and the alternatives are not exactly desirable.

How does garden acting come into play? Put simply: It is garden thinking put into action.

Let us start small and look at a private garden. Which plants do we find there? Are there any at all? Many gardens reflect well how we deal with our surroundings. A few decades ago, it was the three large R (Rasen, Rosen, Rhododendron = lawn, roses, rhododendron), today's fashion are gravel gardens. First, a filter fabric, top it with a thick layer of gravel, and plant a poorly trimmed bonsai-style pine next to two larger boulders. Because a garden is a lot of work, but I want to relax. Thus, big equipment is purchased, from the leaf blower to the huge barbecue grill. Do not forget a gas burner for the evil weeds, which do not want to stay out of the vegetation-free areas. Lastly, there is the expensive lounge furniture set made of plastic. What an exclusive view into a garden desert.

On a larger scale, this is reflected in the cleared-out landscape with corn deserts and an SUV at the door. Overfishing of the seas, deforestation of the primeval forests for soya fields manifest this on the global scale. Why do we wonder about the extinction of species, climate change, and other consequences of our actions? We seem to have a need for an intact world. How could the referendum on bees in Bavaria get so many signatures so quickly?

Again let's start small and look just past our patio door. Is gardening really labor? I am not referring to a park of many thousands of square meters, but to an averagely sized house garden. Instead of suffering in a gym, the success of cutting the grass can be seen immediately. In addition, a scythe has virtually no ecological footprint. Except maybe when the foot gets in the way. A variety of woody plants, perennials, and self-seeding annuals and bi-annuals is good for the soil, for the many animals and especially for the soul of the care-taker. Mixed with fruit and vegetable plants, it is like icing on a cake. Of course, such a garden takes time, but no generation before us has had this much leisure time, and caring for a garden is one of the most meaningful and fulfilling opportunities for leisure activities.

Another aspect is agriculture. Here, too, gardening could make a difference. Regional products from sustainably managed agriculture cost more. In contrast to the English term 'food', evoking the association to 'feed' and 'fodder', the German word 'Lebensmittel' literally can be translated as

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'means sustaining life'. This kind of landscape would not only be more sustainable, but also much more beautiful overall. The longing for small-scale farming is usually satisfied only by advertising or early evening TV shows, while the landscape surrounding the new suburban neighborhoods looks just as bleak as the gardens. So how much is a diverse landscape with healthy products worth to us?

Of course, conserving resources also needs to be done on a global scale. From air travel to palm oil in various products to chickens feet and old clothes that we send to Africa. When local markets have collapsed, we are surprised that there are so many economic migrants. And that's just the tip of the iceberg. In the context of climate change, this is a

dubious saying. Because climate change is not only causing milder winters for us, but is simply a disaster in many parts of the world.

I conclude with a quote by Erich Kästner: "There is nothing good unless you do it." So do not lament, but do something. Small as well as big. It does not hurt to think long term and act that way. Our future generations are calling for a U-turn. Let us older people encourage them to continue to interfere, to act proactively, and to take responsibility. But please not just in the interests of technical environmental protection. Because in order to stick to the image of garden acting, our world should not only function, but also be beautiful and livable.

Thank you for your attention.





Spring 2020 at the Historic Garzoni Garden in Collodi

Mrs. Maria Adriana Giusti

(Politecnico di Torino), member of the General Board of the National Carlo Collodi Foundation and scientific manager for the Historic Garzoni Garden in Collodi, Pescia (Italy)

The Garzoni Garden, a complex historical palimpsest, presents a series of critical issues related to its arboreal, hydraulic and statuary heritage. Such issues are the subject of a *master plan* that a working group at the Politecnico di Torino, which I coordinate, has been elaborating and updating. Our goal is to plan the restoration of each sector analytically studied in all its historical, figurative, and structural components, which have to be related to an overall view in the landscape setting and to a perspective oriented towards the enhancement and improvement of the touristic enjoyment.

In view of such a project, we had prospected specific maintenance work and a range of priorities, as a moment of transition and verification of our planning hypotheses.

Among the priorities, I mention the following ones: the execution of VTA and of potential instrumental tests on the arboreal specimens in the holm oak forest, in order to update our phytostatic knowledge of such specimens and to plan safety or replacement interventions; selective cleaning of flowerbeds, citrus tanks, borders, intermediate gardens (located between the parterre and the stage); the redefinition and integration of the forms and the new blooms of the parterres, the recomposition of the cypresses.

The current situation, which provoked the closure of the garden, the setting of a limit of gardeners, the reduction of touristic resources, namely of both scholastic and not scholastic trips, has forced us to guarantee the minimum level of garden maintenance.

More precisely, the maintenance refers to:

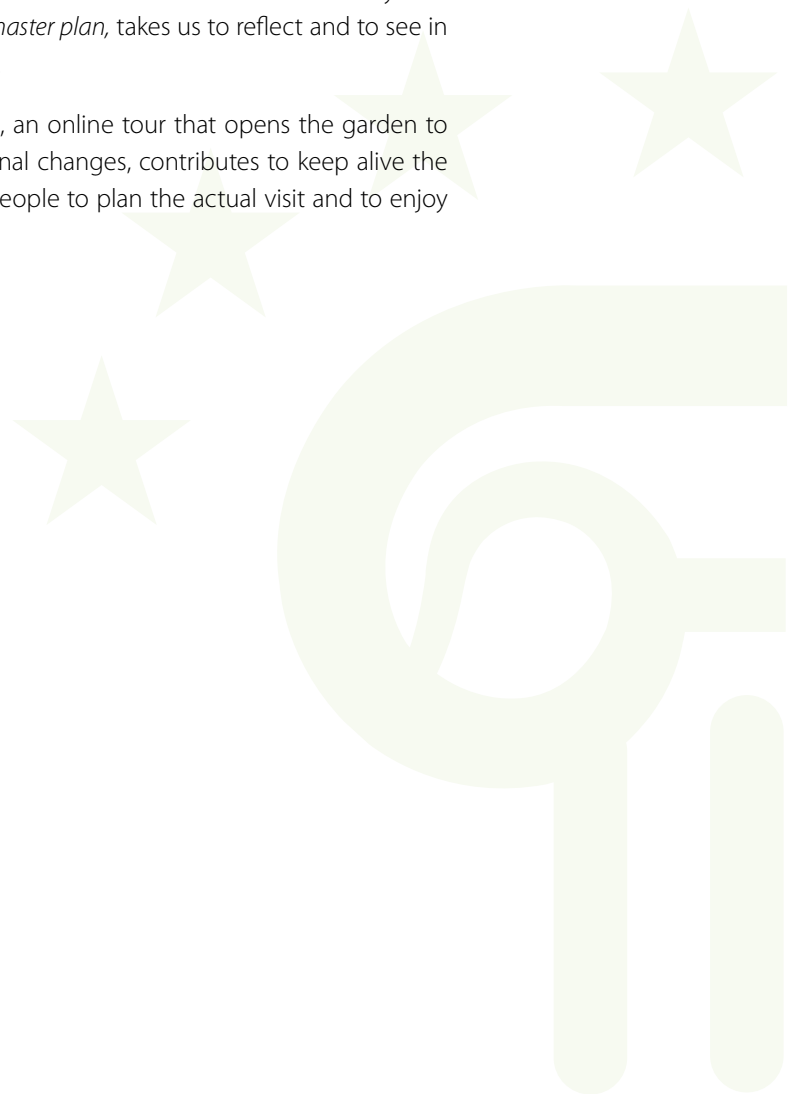
- phytosanitary treatments: for the palm trees (against the palm weevil, *Rhynchophorus ferrugineus*) and for the boxwoods (against the box tree moth, *Cydalima perspectalis*);
- checking the presence of cancer in the cypress (*Seiridium cardinale*) and of the phytopathogenic fungi in the box (*Cylindrocladium buxicola*);
- filling gaps in hedges;
- repositioning of some improperly placed or deteriorated plants;
- cleaning of avenues, drainage ditches, canals;



- preparation of the parterre's ground and reintegration of the seasonal blooms;
- irrigation;
- care and cleaning of the fauna.

The current, unexpected situation, which strongly affects the times and the modalities of our operations, takes place in years already aggravated by the altered climate conditions and it requires an approach more forcefully oriented to environmental and economic sustainability. This is an aspect that, in this phase of elaboration of our *master plan*, takes us to reflect and to see in another light our planning and management choices.

Since services and visits are momentarily suspended, an online tour that opens the garden to virtual visitors, telling its story and showing its seasonal changes, contributes to keep alive the attention and to offer suggestive stories that invite people to plan the actual visit and to enjoy the experience of the garden.





2. Final Thought







Quando despertamos, el jardín estaba todavía allí

Mr. Jose Tito

President of the Scientific Committee of the European Route of Historic Gardens

Reconozcamos que el incubo de la pandemia ha traído a nuestra memoria imágenes terribles, temores colectivos anidados en el subconsciente, recuerdos del pasado leídos en viejas crónicas que han vuelto a renacer en periódicos y televisiones. Las lejanas referencias de las pestes medievales, la debatida gripe española, los ataques de bacterias y virus que en los últimos tiempos han enseñado periódicamente su tétrica patita debajo de la puerta, como en las pesadillas de los cuentos infantiles.

Para mí, persona del jardín, la referencia que me ha venido permanentemente a la cabeza ha sido un clásico literario, el *Decamerón* de Giovanni Boccaccio. Tras la descripción terrible de la mortandad en las ciudades y la enumeración cruel de las actitudes que frente al terror adoptaban unos u otros, desde los más piadosos a los más inmorales, presentaba la perversa contradicción que justificaba el libro: la enfermedad enseñoreada en las ciudades y el grupo de jóvenes escapados a la naturaleza de la montaña y el placer del jardín donde, indolentes, pasaban el tiempo contándose historias jocosas.

El jardín aparecía en los lectores del *Decamerón* como el reducto de paz frente al caos, la vida segura frente a la certeza de la muerte. Allí se producía el retiro, en “un palagio con bello e gran cortile nel mezzo, e con logge e con sale e con camera, tutte, ciascuna verso di se bellissima, e di liete dipinture ragguardevole et ornata, con pratelli dattorno e con giardini maravigliosi” [una casa con bello y grande patio en medio, y con galerías y con salas y con alcobas todas ellas bellísimas y adornadas con encantadoras pinturas dignas de ser miradas, adornada con pradillos en torno y con jardines maravillosos].

No había entonces, cuando Boccaccio escribía, lo que hoy llamamos jardines públicos. La función que hoy cumplen los parques se encontraba alojada en aquel tiempo en los escasos prados comunales de los límites urbanos o en los cultivos agrícolas que, a veces, eran ocupados por los habitantes de las ciudades para reuniones o festejos.

Esta rara amenaza del Covid-19 nos ha enfrentado a una realidad inesperada, el jardín público no ha podido ser ese refugio amable frente al peligro que en nuestro imaginario del pasado cumplían los jardines. Los gestores de la pandemia se han visto obligados a cancelar el ingreso, a cerrar los parques, porque el jardín público podía ser lugar de contacto, de multiplicación de los contagios. En una primavera extraña, la vida en los jardines históricos se ha comportado con ig-

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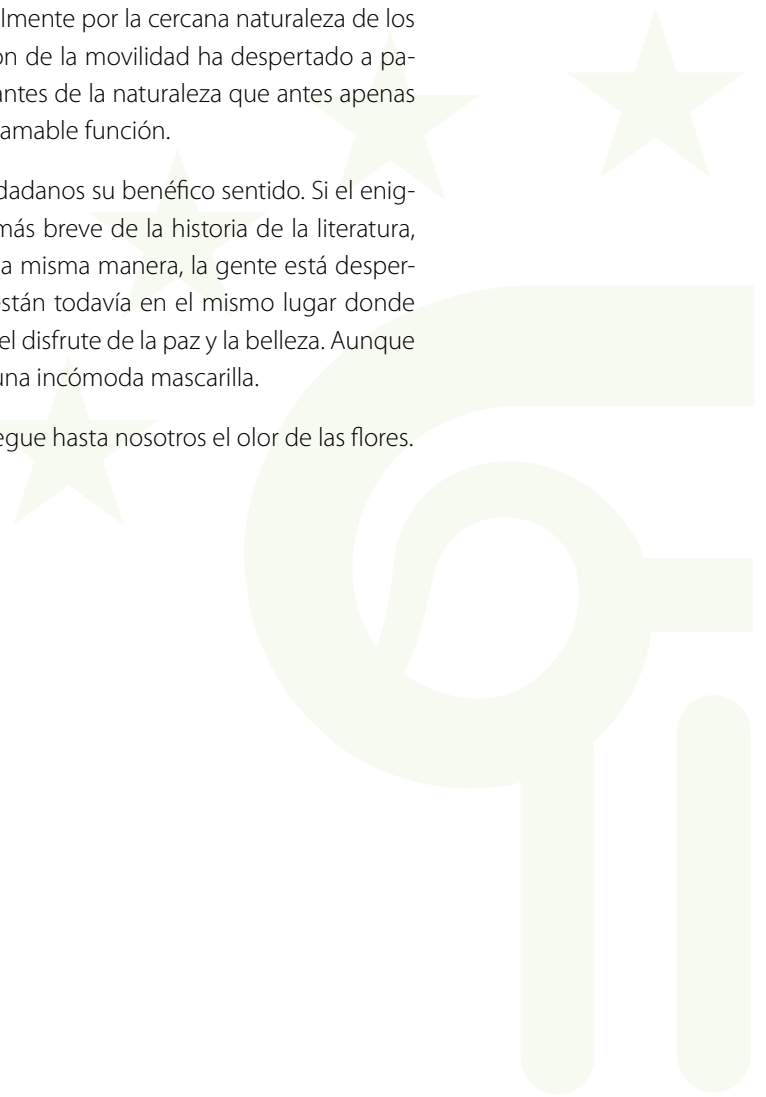
Cuando despertamos, el jardín estaba todavía allí · **Mr. Jose Tito**

norado esplendor: floraciones no vistas, sombras y aromas no visitados, fauna libre ante la insólita soledad de los sitios. Los responsables de los jardines han tenido que elaborar estrategias para las que no estaban preparados, manteniendo en óptimas condiciones maravillas que no podían verse, programando trabajos de jardineros que tenían que observar precauciones distintas de las habituales, efectuando gastos no previstos sin contrapartida alguna de ingresos económicos.

Con el tiempo, pasado el momento de mayor peligro, cuando las sociedades han desarrollado medidas de protección y se ha liberado la movilidad, ha aparecido un nuevo fenómeno: el ansia de las poblaciones por el placer de la naturaleza, especialmente por la cercana naturaleza de los parques públicos y los jardines. La paulatina recuperación de la movilidad ha despertado a paseantes que antes nunca paseaban, a multitudes de amantes de la naturaleza que antes apenas recordaban que existía. Y el jardín ha vuelto a cumplir su amable función.

Se han abierto de nuevo los jardines prestando a los ciudadanos su benéfico sentido. Si el enigmático personaje de Augusto Monterroso, en el relato más breve de la historia de la literatura, "Cuando despertó, el dinosaurio todavía estaba allí", de la misma manera, la gente está despertando de la pesadilla y descubriendo que los jardines están todavía en el mismo lugar donde estaban. Ofreciéndose. Abiertos de nuevo para el solaz y el disfrute de la paz y la belleza. Aunque todavía, durante un tiempo, tengamos que hacerlo con una incómoda mascarilla.

He descubierto con placer que esa tela no impide que llegue hasta nosotros el olor de las flores.





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