

Gunnebo House and Gardens

Where the 18th century meets the present

Gunnebo House and Gardens is one of the most beautiful 18th century estates in Sweden. The house was built as a summer residence for the wealthy merchant John Hall and was completed in 1796. The entire estate of Gunnebo was designed by Carl Wilhelm Carlberg, town architect of Gothenburg, from the house and its furniture and interior decorations, to the gardens and surrounding buildings.

The estate has been preserved and maintained over the centuries and more recently restored to its former splendour with the aid of Carlberg's original architectural drawings.

Gunnebo is a site of special historical value and enjoys the highest degree of cultural protection. In 2002 Gunnebo received the EU's Europa Nostra award for preservation of cultural heritage. In 2003 Gunnebo was designated a cultural reservation.

In the 1950s the well-preserved formal garden around the house was restored. Since then, further elements of the formal garden have been restored and the ruined kitchen garden was recreated. Carlberg also designed a number of surrounding buildings including servants' quarters, greenhouses and wings to the main building, which have also been restored.

Today, the two most important aspects of the gardens are their history and the focus on organic gardening. The ongoing history of the gardens provides inspiration and recreation opportunities to current visitors. The organic focus has natural links with the gardening skills of the 18th century, and the aim is to demonstrate that it is possible to create a beautiful garden using organic methods. We want to inspire our visitors to try gardening organically. All the gardens are managed organically and are certified organic.

Gardens of Gothenburg 2008 provides fascinating encounters between history and the modern day by showing off distinctly contemporary gardens against the contrasting background of this historical setting.

For the exhibition, Gunnebo's head gardener will create a historical kitchen garden that is based on many years of research into the 18th century Swedish kitchen garden. In stark contrast, we will also create a futuristic kitchen garden that is freed from the rigid formality of the estate. This garden will consist of large field plantations made up solely of edible plants, broken up by sharp graphical lines in a meeting between natural and artificially abstract shapes. Trials will be carried out here to develop different planting arrangements for kitchen gardens and to explore exciting new combinations.

The kitchen garden is not only intended as a garden space filled with attractive and tasty plants, but also as an arena where existential questions are initiated and discussed. In the new kitchen garden we will present three Show Gardens by Topher Delaney, USA; Monika Gora, Sweden; and John Tizzard, Sweden/England. The three invited designers will each give their answers to the question: What will tomorrow's kitchen garden look like?

Topher Delaney: Labyrinth kitchen garden

Monika Gora: Travelling kitchen garden

John Tizzard: Roots

In the old kitchen garden, tasty historical vegetables will be grown and later served in Gunnebo Coffee House and Restaurant. There is also a spice garden and section where flowers are grown for cutting.

In the formal garden around the house, further steps are being taken to restore the garden to its original beauty. Over the course of the year the garden's finer details and small-scale decorations will be recreated in the form of urns, fences and decorative flower beds.

On the site where the magnificent orangerie once stood, Topher Delaney will create an installation that is inspired by the site, its history and the direction that Gunnebo is taking today.

To further accentuate the inherent characteristics of the estate, the entire garden site will be illuminated at night by lighting designer Torbjörn Eliasson. Artistic elements in the various green spaces of the estate will further enhance the evocative appeal.

Go organic – Go to Gunnebo.

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