

Trädgårdsföreningen – The Garden Society of Gothenburg

An enchanting journey through time and space

The Garden Society of Gothenburg is one of the finest gardens in Sweden. Work began on the gardens in 1842 and reached its peak around the turn of the century. In 1992 the park was listed as a historic site. With its splendid Palm House the park provides a much-loved oasis in the heart of the city and is a popular attraction for tourists.

As part of the exhibition we want to restore the Garden Society of Gothenburg as a focal point for horticulture and gardening. This is being done by preserving old areas that are intact and reconstructing and renovating other parts of the park. By doing so we want to lay the foundation for a site that will regain its former glory and atmosphere, but also allow it to develop and reflect contemporary architecture.

With the aid of excavations, old photos and drawings, the area around the Palm House and the Director's House in the central part of the Garden Society of Gothenburg has been restored to its original condition when the park was at its most beautiful in around 1900. Serpentine paths, wooded areas and traditional symmetric flower beds echo the grand old days of the park.

Multilayered planting methods have been used to give added variety and depth to the park. The new woodlands have been designed by some of the most prominent landscape architects and plant designers in Europe. Our intention with these woodlands is to demonstrate the possibilities that exist for restoring and improving old parks and overgrown gardens. The designers of the planting schemes include Piet Oudolf, Holland; Julie Toll, England; Jacqueline van der Kloet, Holland; Nicholas Delahooke, England/Sweden; Heiner Luz, Germany; Rune Bengtsson and Ulf Nordfjell, Sweden. All the woodland areas have different characters and plant choices that demonstrate diversity and relationships with the environment.

Symmetrical flower beds were a popular form of planting in the early 20th century and are experiencing a resurgence in interest. Traditionally they consist of beds planted in decorative patterns, often with Mediterranean plants at their centre. Visitors to the exhibition can see historical reconstructions as well as totally modern planting arrangements created by Sweden's leading garden designers.

Since the Rose Garden was created in the mid-1980s the Garden Society of Gothenburg has increasingly become associated with roses in all their diversity. Recently, the Rose Garden has undergone a major overhaul. The modern roses have been gathered in their own sections and new rose pergolas and themed rose gardens have been created. These show how roses can be used together with other plants in different types of garden settings. The rose gardens have

been designed by some of the best-known architects and landscape architects of our time, including Piet Oudolf and Jane Schul from Denmark.

In the second half of the Rose Garden the historic roses are gathered in a unique Rose Park designed by Ulf Nordfjell. The design reflects contemporary tastes, with roses set against a backdrop of thousands of perennials and grasses, as well as bushes and trees. There is a specially built pergola, mirror pond and seating in granite, steel and wood, framed by deep green hedges of yew. The design is timeless and the species roses and historic collection of older roses are displayed in chronological order. With its new approach and content we believe that the Rose Park will be a great success among eager rose experts and the garden-loving public, and well worth a visit all year round.

During the summer exhibition several of the buildings in the Garden Society of Gothenburg will open temporarily, including the Water House in the Palm House and the original seed store, which will become a shop. Various buildings will house three smaller exhibitions by Swedish designers: "Master Gardeners through the Ages" by Ia Schildt, "Today's Garden" by Synnöve Mork and Ulf Nordfjell, and "Green pleasure under glass" by Hannu Sarenström.

For the duration of the exhibition the large lawn in front of the Palm House will also provide the setting for a number of theme gardens created by internationally recognised UK designers such as Philip Nixon and Helen and James Dooley in collaboration with Gardens Illustrated magazine. Several Swedish designers will be working with students from a variety of colleges to create five student gardens. A Garden Avenue will show off modern Swedish greenhouses for private gardens and will sell plants, garden products and Swedish art and crafts goods. The Garden Avenue will provide a meeting place with various themes during the summer:

- Roses, Romance and Red Berries, 28 June – 3 August
- Garden Spaces, Rocket and Rose Anemones, 4–31 August
- Rosehips, Neon and Fresh Harvests, 1–14 September
- Enchanting Bulbs and Exotic Tubers, 15–28 September

The exhibition and landscape architect for the restoration of the Garden Society of Gothenburg is Ulf Nordfjell, previously also exhibition architect for Gardens of Gothenburg 2000 and for "A Tribute to Linnaeus", the gold-medal-winning garden at Chelsea Flower Show 2007, which has now been recreated at Gothenburg Botanical Garden.

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