



Botanical Garden

of the Faculty of Science,
University of Zagreb

125th Anniversary

Celebration

1889 – 2014

The Main Entrance gate to the Royal
University Botanical Garden, 1900



The oldest university botanical garden in Croatia, Botanical Garden of the Faculty of Science, University of Zagreb (the Garden), will in 2014, through a variety of events, celebrate the 125th anniversary of its continuous work. Throughout the 125 years of its existence, the Garden operates within the University, at first as part of the Faculty of Philosophy and today belonging to the Faculty of Science. It has always had an important role in the university teaching, scientific research and expert work in the field of botany, as well as in educating the public about the importance of joint actions with aim to protect and preserve the wealth of national flora.

The idea of necessity to establish a botanical garden within the Botany and Physiology Department of the Faculty of Philosophy originated from prof. dr. Bohuslav

Jiruš, the first professor of botany at the University of Zagreb. He was fully supported by the then rector of the University, prof. dr. Stjepan Spevec. To the University's initiative, in 1884 the Royal Land Government decided to constitute the botanical garden for the Royal University. The idea was put into action in 1889 by the university professor of botany dr. Antun Heinz. 120 years ago, the location of the Garden (south side of the Marko Marulić Square) was in the outskirts of the city that numbered only 38000 residents. The plants were firstly arranged according to phylogenetic relationships, at the same time taking into account the aesthetic value of the Garden. The largest part of the Garden was set in the English landscape style with winding paths and freely growing groups of trees and shrubs. Only the *flower parterre* in the southern side of the greenhouses was constructed in the French style of strict order and symmetry in the layout.



The 1889 Botanical Garden Plan

Today, the Botanical Garden is an integral part of a sequence of handsome old Zagreb squares and parks known by the name of 'Lenuci's' or the 'Green Horseshoe'. Because of its great educational, cultural, historical and touristic values and its overall significance for Zagreb and Croatia, since 1971 the Garden has been protected as a park architecture monument. It is also entered in the Register of Cultural Goods of the Ministry of Culture and protected as 'original architectural achievement and a complete urban, architectonic and park space'.



Flower parterre with the view of greenhouses, around 1920

Only a decade after its foundation, the Garden already had a diverse plant collection, which today numbers more than 5000 plant taxa. Winter resistant woody plants (shrubs and trees) are grown in the arboretum, while sensitive species from warm climates overwinter in the greenhouses.

Decorative perennials are cultivated in the *flower parterre*, around the small lakes and in the flowerbeds of the *flower rainbow*. Particularly valuable parts of the collection are indigenous plants, belonging to the rich and diverse native flora, grown in the phytogeographical groups – rock gardens: Karstic, Sub-Mediterranean and two Mediterranean. Among those, most prominent are the 300 statutorily protected Croatian wild species. Two most recognized Croatian endemics, the Velebit degenia (*Degenia velebitica*) and Dubrovnik cornflower (*Centaurea raguzina*), are periodically available for purchase.

Tropical and subtropical plants are cultivated in the greenhouses, and are displayed in the open during summer. Marsh plants grow in the small lakes, the ponds and in the little dome-greenhouse on the *flower parterre*. Important part of the collection is also situated in the systematic field, intended for the university teaching in botany.

125th Anniversary of Botanical Garden



Fountain and ponds with water lilies, 1924



“The *Velebit degenia* exhibition” in the exhibition pavilion, 2008

Recent activities of the Botanical Garden completely fulfil all the conditions from the widely accepted definition of botanical gardens and their difference from other public gardens and parks. Accordingly, a botanical garden is an institution holding documented collections of living plants for the purposes of scientific research, conservation, display and education. Hence, our plant collection is properly documented and for more than a century used in university research and

teaching of botany. The Garden is also open to public without an entrance fee, from its beginning. A variety of educational and popularization activities organized by the Garden curators catch attention of many visitors, which is evident from the fact that the Garden is the third most visited tourist site in Zagreb.

The Garden is a member of the *Botanical Gardens Conservation International* (BGCI), an assembly of nearly 1000 botanical gardens in the world. This membership greatly facilitates our efforts to develop different activities, within our financial possibilities, by sharing the experiences with other botanical gardens around the Globe.

The activities of botanical gardens in the 21 century are largely devoted to research, conservation of wild plants and public education. Botanical gardens around the world, as well as ours, contribute to achievement of a number of adopted international conventions and agreements, with a common goal to pre-



Pupils discover the Garden’s plant diversity in an expert guided tour

serve and protect rare and endangered plant species.

During the last 20 years, the number of various activities and events in the Garden has continuously been on the rise. One of the oldest educational activities for visitors is a guided garden tour. By restoring the *exhibition pavilion* in 2007, the Garden attained a representative exhibition and education space intended for various workshops, lectures and exhibitions, related to the wondrous world of plants. Those events are exceptionally well attended, e.g. the exhibition *Fantastic Forest*, organized on the occasion of the International year of forests, was visited by more than 11000 people in only five months, with more than 4000 foreign tourists. Every year the *exhibition pavilion* hosts several dozen workshops for children and adults dedicated to plants in the broadest sense.

The Garden employees connected to other gardens and arboreta in Croatia in order to achieve common goals. Wishing the small community of Croatian botanical gardens and arboreta would act together and share experiences, at the same time encouraging the owners and the public in general to try to take better care for their collections, in 2011 we launched an annual event '*Week of Croatian Botanical Gardens and Arboreta*'. During the first year, public response was above expectations, and now we are proud to say that the 2013 event numbered 22 participating gardens with more than 10 000 satisfied visitors.

Since most children who live in cities have scarce opportunities to grow plants, a small *children's flower and vegetable garden* was set in our Botanical Garden. With the help of their teachers and Garden staff, pupils from the nearby school and kindergarten sow and plant their own flowers and vegetables, and nurture them during the season until the autumn harvest.

It is worth noting that the Garden curators, along their expert work, are engaged in scientific botanical research, with their papers published in various journals and magazines.



Workshop *Botanical magic: let's play herbarizing!* held during the 3rd Week of Croatian Botanical Gardens and Arboreta, 2013



Little hands and big hands sowing and planting in the new *children's flower and vegetable garden*, 2013





BOTANIČKI
VRT



125th
Anniversary
of Botanical
Garden



1st Week of Croatian Botanical Gardens and Arboreta opening ceremony in the Garden's exhibition pavilion

125th Anniversary of Botanical Garden

During the entire 2014 season a number of different events is going to take place in the Garden to mark the 125th anniversary. The program is beginning in May, with the 4th *Week of Croatian Botanical Gardens and Arboreta* opening ceremony. This manifestation is going to be organized for the 4th year in a row by the Section of Croatian Botanical Gardens and Arboreta within the *Croatian Botanical Society*. National representatives of botanical gardens from EU countries, Switzerland and Norway – all members of the *European Botanic Gardens Consortium*, EBGC - are going to join the 125th anniversary celebration ceremony in June. Their regular meeting is going to be held prior to the celebration ceremony at the invitation of the Garden's manager and Croatian representative to EBGC. In September, the Garden is hosting the annual garden party of the University of Zagreb, to mark the beginning of the academic year.

In 2014, it is expected that a new pedestrian bridge over the Miramarska road is going to be installed by the City of Zagreb, opening a new, eastern entrance to the Garden. Setting up of temporary plastic greenhouses for accommodating plants during the *exhibition greenhouses* restoration is also planned. We hope the financial support for the old greenhouses restoration project will be secured from the city budget, as promised by Milan Bandić, the Mayor of Zagreb.

It should be noted that the City of Zagreb has been co-financing the Garden's activities for the last couple of decades, and over the last several years has contributed chiefly to financing the restoration of the Garden's infrastructure and historical buildings, alongside the University of Zagreb and the Faculty of Science.



Annual University garden party held near the Garden's *exhibition pavilion*, 2011



The Mayor of Zagreb Milan Bandić welcomes guests at the University garden party held to promote the *exhibition greenhouses* restoration project, 2013

Preliminary calendar of the Botanical Garden events in 2014

April 1

- opening of the Botanical Garden to visitors
- awarding prizes to children, winners of the quiz contest held during the 2013 exhibition on Croatia's contribution to EU-wide 'Natura 2000' nature protection network

April 17

- The Faculty of Science Day celebration ceremony

May 5

- *Section of Croatian Botanical Gardens and Arboreta* (Croatian Botanical Society) members' meeting: *'The future of Croatian botanical gardens in EU'*

May 12 – 18

- The 4th Week of Croatian botanical gardens and arboreta

June 6 – 8

- *European Botanic Gardens Consortium* (EBGC) meeting

June 8

- Central ceremony marking the 125th anniversary of the Garden, attended by representatives of the Croatian government, the City of Zagreb and the University of Zagreb, as well as representatives of European botanical gardens
- Handing over the Certificates of appreciation for exceptional contributions to the Garden
- special jubilee stamp issue promotion

September

- Annual University garden party to mark the beginning of new academic year





The greenhouses and propagation beds, 1895



More than century old *exhibition greenhouses* in need of restoration, 2013

125th Anniversary of Botanical Garden

With the care of the City and the University of Zagreb over the past decade, the Garden's *exhibition pavilion*, eastern fence, the main entrance gate and water supply network were renovated. However, the central *exhibition greenhouses* complex built in 1891, a notable example of specific architectural heritage and uniquely preserved greenhouses of that type in Croatia, are the only valuable building within Zagreb's Green Horseshoe that remains in bad condition to this day, due to lack of proper renovation since its construction.

Since the putting up of the first greenhouses in the world, *exhibition greenhouses* gradually became an indispensable element of every major botanical garden. One could say that the value of a 19th and early 20th century botanical gardens was often measured by the size of its tropical plants collection displayed to the public in the *exhibition greenhouses*.

Similarly, greenhouses for cultivation of exotic tropical plants were built in the end of the 19th century in the University of Zagreb Botanical Garden. After over a century of use, they require a thorough renovation. The project of restoring the *exhibition greenhouses* was prepared by conservation architect Mladen Perušić, with the help of the Garden manager Biserka Juretić.

It is envisaged that the arrangement of tropical plants is going to be in tune with the way they were first planted after the construction of the greenhouse, in the end of the 19th century. The

original names of the buildings are going to be used and an addition of a seed bank and a small gift store are also part of the restoration plan.

Renovation of the *exhibition greenhouses* is going to contribute greatly to the integrity of the historic architectural heritage of the city parks within Zagreb's Lower Town, and again make exotic tropical plants grown indoors available for public display. The greenhouses restoration project and renovation of other historical buildings, as well as further development of the Garden's activities, is planned by the financial support of the City of Zagreb and EU funds. In that regard, it is worth mentioning the project H.O.R.T.U.S. (*Heart of green to Europe's sheen*), which has been accepted in 2013 by the Ministry of regional development and EU funds within their 'Preparation and implementation of development projects for EU funds' program.

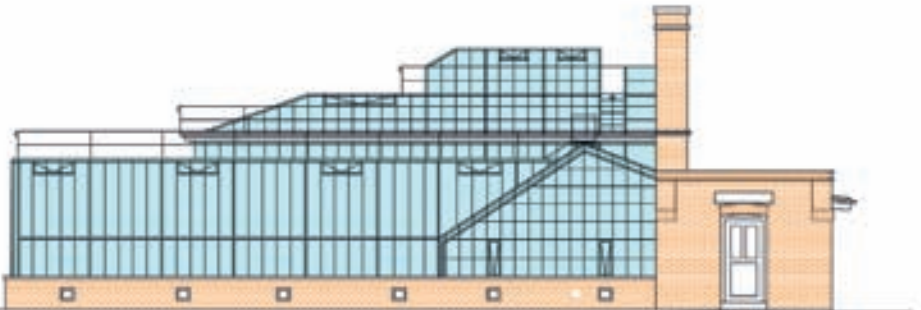
We hope to begin with the restoration of the *exhibition greenhouses* next year, with implementation of the H.O.R.T.U.S. project to follow.



A rare and endemic species of orchid from Mexico (*Stanhopea hernandezii*) is being cultivated in the tropical greenhouse for decades



Exhibition greenhouses restoration project - the facades.
Author: conservation architect Mladen Perušić, 2013





Slava Raškaj: *Waterlilies in the Botanic Garden in Zagreb*, 1899. Zagreb, Croatian School Museum



Botanical Garden

Division of Biology
Faculty of Science
University of Zagreb



Marulićev trg 9a, 10000 Zagreb
+385 1 48 98 060
botgarzg@botanic.hr

<http://hirc.botanic.hr/vrt/home.htm>



Text prepared by Biserka Juretić

