

# Gardens and Parks

**Prague can quite rightly be proud of its more than two hundred historical gardens and parks, some of which have their founding dates as far back as the Middle Ages.**

The majority of the earliest gardens belonged to monasteries, and the private ones, surrounding palaces and town houses came later on in the Renaissance epoch. Every epoch brought its own style into garden design giving the gardens a certain look and layout that reflected the period philosophy and understanding of space.

Probably the most revolutionary garden design changes came with the Baroque period, when the monumentality of architecture became reflected in the gardens surrounding them. As opposed to the Renaissance flat and transparent layout, usually in regular squares, Baroque came with the axis composition, geometric shapes and patterns. At the same time, it plays with the vertical dimension, when the area is divided into the so called bosquets, a clump of thickly planted trees or bushes to create an interior grassed space, or cabinet de verdure.



Another revolutionary change was the brand new concept of gardens in the style of English landscape design. Formal layout, regularity and geometry was replaced by the wild array of free growing woody plants, which were not maintained by cutting, and the overall ambience of the garden was to remind one of the wildness of nature.

Soft curved flowerbed outlines, planted mostly by perennials, were reminiscent more of meadows than cultivated flowers. It was also around this time, in the 19th century, when the boom in travel, industrial revolution and technological advances brought about a new fashion to import various woody plants and flowers from foreign countries.

Thanks to the collector's passion of many noblemen, today we can admire aged trees, which we would have to otherwise travel far to see. On the other hand, many of those plants have over the years become domesticated and some of them cause significant trouble.

The revolutionary changes of the 19th century also meant that nobility had gradually opened its private gardens to the public. Today we can be pleased that a good number of these gardens were preserved with many of them having been renovated to their original appearance. We can therefore keep enjoying them.