

Green Museum: a botanic garden for new Grugliasco park

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A look to recent developments in the display techniques used in museums shows an increase in the range of displayed objects. Proposing the plant kingdom as the theme for an exhibition or a museum seems therefore interesting and appropriate; the choice should fall onto the specimens which could support an aesthetic, scientific and environmental message.

A so-called “green museum” should expand its mission towards a thorough explanation of the complex relationship between man and plants; in fact, it is easily noted that the most common form of mutual intercourse between man and plants takes place as a pastime, an activity perceived as wholesome, which everybody should spend some time on in their private lives. Moreover, environmental issues are often considered so distant and abstract that people do not feel involved in them and, consequently, they tend to be underestimated and forgotten.



The “green museum” could come in useful as an instrument in order to bring them to a familiar scale; in addition to that, the knowledge of home and hardy species could improve the identification process of people and their “motherland”.

This would also bring about exploitation of local resources and commitment to their conservation.

This is the starting point of a study which is made up of seven sections. In the introductory one, the focus is on understanding the difference between more traditional forms of exhibition and displaying living plants; this leads to defining a series of specific features of “green museums”.



The following section deals with the beginning of a tradition in putting plants on display; it started in the sixteenth century and reached its full extent in the eighteenth century, when greenhouses of iron and glass were built for the first time. In order to have all the instruments needed to design such an exhibition, the different typologies of “green museum” (botanic gardens and demonstration gardens; garden festivals; urban parks, theme parks and biodomes) are listed and illustrated by means of various examples. The visitor centre, as an architectural and functional type, is defined in the first part of section five, whereas the second part is dedicated to the detailed illustration of the display techniques such as lighting, environmental control, communication, care and maintenance. Water and hydroponics gardens are described in a monographic paragraph.

Another chapter refers to the greenhouse as a showcase; the features of botanical conservatories are listed and explained through many examples, either dating back to the past, or belonging to present time. The final section covers the design process which led to the proposal for the new Parco di Grugliasco; the project sets up a working relationship between Turin’s Botanical Garden and refers directly to the master plan which Grugliasco local administration implemented on the area.

The project is based on three polarities, such as a visitor centre (intended to be built so that the main alley of the park crosses its yard), a sweep of outdoor theme gardens, and a wide greenhouse for aquatic plants.



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