

Book review

GARDENS IN RURAL AREAS. Ecological, economic and historical conditions

Albrecht Ziburski, Gärten auf dem Lande. Gartenkunst gestern und heute
(Gardens in rural areas. Gardening art yesterday and today),

Stuttgart 2014, Eugen Ulmer KG, pp.180, ISBN 978-3-8001-7952-7, www.ulmer.de

Introductory comments

Albrecht Ziburski is one of the most famous gardening and botanical authors in Germany. He has been dealing with this issue in the German-speaking area – for over 20 years, among others, as the author of the magazine “Landlust”. Since 2006, together with his wife Ute Ziburski, he has been shaping the Morriem Garden in the Wesermarsch area near Oldenburg (Lower Saxony) (Ziburski, 2012, p. 96). Regional and historical forms of gardens are the basis of gardens in rural areas, which are being created today. More than any other garden, these gardens convey the mood and arouse emotions and memories. Rural gardens harmonize with their surroundings, rural horticultural tradition, and landscape.

Ziburski’s book is comprehensive and richly illustrated (155 color photographs in total). The following components can be distinguished: “On peasant gardens and horticultural art”; “Peasant gardens in the High Black Forest”; “Baroque model – peasant gardens in the Emmental Valley”; “Representative gardens in North-West Germany”; “Gardens of the rich peasants of Artland”; “Slingertuinen in Oldambt”; “20th century peasant gardens”; “Gardens, landscape and nature”; “New gardens with a broad perspective”; “Opportunities for horticultural art and gardens in rural areas”.

The historical forms of peasant gardens

The first part: “On peasant gardens and horticultural art” is preliminary. Gardens in rural areas have developed, as well as houses, as a result of cultural and economic influences and have a regional character. The largest number of historical garden designs can be found in England, France, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Germany. There is now a renaissance of rural gardens and horticultural art in rural areas as a challenge for the 21st century. Another part: “The Peasant gardens in the High Black Forest area” includes the old cultural landscape. In the middle of the 20th century, the majority of farms in the High Black Forest were self-supply farms, and the gardens were utilitarian in nature, dominated by the cultivation of vegetables or plants for medicinal purposes. A. Ziburski depicts two gardens: the garden of Erika Moser in Oberprechtal

and the garden of Berty Feser in Hinterzarten. Erika Moser runs a garden based on mixed culture, pioneering sustainable horticulture. B. Feser, on the other hand, has turned the traditional garden into an ornamental garden with lots of flowers as part of the peasant culture of the Black Forest.

The Emmental Valley in Switzerland is closely linked to the Black Forest. Prosperity in the Emmental Valley was a factor in the development of horticultural culture in the Baroque period. The gardens of the Nydegger family in Alchenstorf, the garden of the Wyss-Bolzli family, also in Alchenstorf, the garden of the Schweitzer family on the Mistelberg mountain, as well as the peasant gardens in Waldhaus and Flühen come from this period. All these gardens are reminiscent of French Baroque gardens, although on a much smaller scale.

There are also representative gardens in North-West Germany. The characteristic feature of these gardens is fruit and ornamental trees. A number of different varieties were developed there, and gardens became a kind of "showcase" of farms, and peasant gardens referred to the English landscape solutions. A characteristic feature of such gardens was the construction of rock caves – one could even speak of "the fever of the construction of caves". Many of these gardens were later degraded and their reconstruction became very popular, e.g. in the garden Insea Köster-Laer in Oldenburg-Ofen. Between Osnabrück and Cloppenburg there is a geographical area known as Artland, which was an evangelical enclave. The farm "Wehburg" is even considered to be the most beautiful in Germany. The Artland gardens were characterized by cut trees, so-called topiary gardens, where yew figures were the most suitable for this. The most famous gardens in Artland include the Berner/Meyer zu Devern farm garden in Badbergen and the Meyerhof farm of the Nutteln family near Cloppenburg. Many historic Artland gardens are currently being reconstructed (especially the gardens of yew figures). The gardens in the Frisian municipality of Oldambt (east of the town of Groningen) in the Netherlands were also very characteristic. They are referred to by the Dutch word "Slingertuinen", which can be translated as "twisted gardens". Gardens were created in front of the houses of rich peasants, shaped in the English style, where beeches with red foliage were characteristic. The landscaped gardens in Oldambt were the hallmark of the rich farmers of Oldambt. These gardens are currently being reconstructed (more than 100 Slingertuinen). An example of such a garden is the garden of the Vroom family.

Modern gardens in rural areas

During the 18th and 19th centuries, peasant gardens in the north of Germany were the most common utility gardens, where vegetables, potatoes, and fruit were grown. In those centuries, they were not actually peasant gardens. The new gardens, which were later called peasant gardens, were associated with Hamburg. The famous ones were Alfred Lichtwark (director of the art hall in Hamburg) and painters Graf Leopold von Kalckreuth and Max Liebermann. The idea of A. Lichtwark was to combine usability and beauty in one object. Peasant flowers and pastors, road crossings, the so-called round saucepan or boxwood hedges were used in the gardens. The painter Max Liebermann

built his summer villa in Berlin on the basis of Lichtwark's assumptions, where the ideal was created in the form of a peasant garden. Small gardens with clear forms and favorite flowers quickly became very well known in Germany.

During the Nazi rule in Germany, the peasant garden was associated with the racist ideology of National Socialism, where the concept of the "indigenous gardening art" was applied. Willy Lange represented different views and considered the ideas of a natural garden and family landscape – he had a great influence on Karl Foerster's horticultural activity. At the same time, thirty years after the Second World War, the Hamburg countryside garden was "rediscovered", which was reflected in open-air museums such as the Freilichtmuseum Kiel Molfsee and Museumsdorf Cloppenburg, as well as in the garden of Klosterkielhof in Hude near Oldenburg, founded by a garden architect J. Winkler and his wife Lisa. The garden of the Winkler family became a model for garden design in the seventies and eighties of the twentieth century. Immediately in England Rosemary Verey founded Barnsley House Garden as a model kitchen garden, which referred to the French "Potager" concept.

The great history and the influence on the situation today have the concepts of landscape garden, which appeared initially in England in Rousham (around 1730), and William Kent is the creator of the landscape garden. However, 150 years later, the second revolution in naturalistic garden design began. This revolution was carried out by William Robinson, who included perennials, shrubs and bulbous plants for shaping gardens. The most important were two books by W. Robinson: "The English Flower Garden" (1883), where attention was drawn to the artistic design of gardens with perennials, woody plants and harmonious colors. The book "The English Flower Garden" still remains the most sold garden book today. W. Robinson's second book "The Wild Garden" remains very popular. As a result of a good sale of W. Robinson's books, he bought Gravetye Manor residence (80 km from London on the border of Kent and Sussex). Today, Gravetye is an exclusive hotel and the garden has been restored in the spirit of W. Robinson's gardening principles.

In the 1930s, Jens Jensen developed the concept of a prairie garden in the USA, where natural wildernesses became an ideal. He also found some followers in Europe. Already in the sixties of the last century, Beth Chatto developed the concept of a gravel garden and adopted the concept of the right plant for the right site. A similar position was also represented by R. Hansen, who scientifically dealt with the requirements of plants (perennials and woody plants). However, B. Chatto understands horticultural activity not as science, but as art. A similar position is represented by the gardeners of the Dutch Wave group, whose members are Ton ten Linden, Coen Jansen, Henk Gerritsen, and Piet Oudolf. The latter became the most famous representative of the "horticultural scene" in the 21st century. However, attention is paid not only to flowers but also to the entire plant structure. In Germany, the horticulture of Ernst Pagels became a place of growing perennials and grasses, which came mainly from south-eastern Europe and prairie vegetation from North America.

Today, many new gardens with an open landscape perspective have been created: Tom Stuart-Smith has created the Broughton Grange garden; Gina Price is the founder

of Pettifers Garden; Sylvie and Patrick Quibel have designed Garden Le Jardin Plume, and Anne Wareham has created Garden Veddw. T. Stuart-Smith has created the Broughton Grange garden completely new in Cotswolds, where he has succeeded in associating the garden and landscape and built certain architectural structures. Just a few kilometers from the Broughton Grange garden is Gina Price's "Pettifers" Garden, where there is also a transition from the garden to the open landscape. In 1996 Sylvie and Patrick Quibel created the garden "Le Jardin Plume", which is described as an interesting, very modern garden in Europe located in Normandy near Rouen. Anne Wareham's Veddw is located in the English-Wales border area, where the garden and its surroundings are closely connected.

Closing remarks

It is often claimed today that horticultural art is the most important of all arts, combining poetry, theatre, as well as philosophical and political manifestos. According to the author, the 19th century saw the collapse of gardening art. Private country gardens have now lost their importance as the avant-garde of horticultural culture, although according to A. Ziburski we are currently even experiencing a renaissance of horticultural art in rural areas, and for this purpose, this book has been written.

Albrecht Ziburski's book "Gardens in rural areas. Garden art yesterday and today" deserves the attention of Polish readers. It is written very clearly and richly illustrated. Many of the problems raised in this book remain little known in Poland. The author focuses on Western Europe: Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands, England, and France. However, there is no reflection on the situation in other European countries, although the author clearly indicates the key role of England in landscape gardening. It would be worth translating this well-written book into Polish as a valuable, richly illustrated book containing many specific guidelines for the creation of gardens in rural areas.

Literature

Ziburski (2012), *Garten Morriem. Für Spaziergang zwischen Rittersporn und Wiesenkopf (Garden Morriem. A walk between a larkspur and a burnet)*, Stuttgart

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