



Garden of via Santa Caterina 29

The garden is accessed from the ancient medieval portico that aligns the narrow, irregular façades of the buildings, painted in various shades of orange and typical Bolognese red. This long succession of small council houses was redeveloped in 1973 by the municipal administration, thanks to the Economic and Popular Housing Plan (PEEP) drawn up by architect Pierluigi Cervellati, aimed at restoring the dwellings and then reassigning them to the families of pensioners and artisans who already lived there, thus preserving the urban and social identity of this area of the historic centre. As a continuation of this town-planning intervention, the administration of most of the homes in Via Santa Caterina was entrusted to Acer (Azienda Casa Emilia Romagna), which is still in charge of re-allocating the housing by ranking.

The garden is reached after crossing a pleasant courtyard and a long passageway. A large circular masonry artefact covered by a burnished metal sheet protrudes from the pavement, a well, used until the 19th century to supply drinking water to the entire building. For hygienic and sanitary reasons, most of the city wells were later closed; nevertheless, traces thereof can still be found today in many of Bologna's courtyards. Past the paved area, adorned with pots of Yucca elephantipes, calla lilies and Aucuba japonica plants, a large white-flowered oleander flanks the pathway, hand-decorated with ceramic inserts, which bisects the garden full of plants, most of which have been planted by residents over the years. Until a few years ago, the garden's main caretaker was Antonio, a condominium owner who lived in the house at the end of the garden. A bricklayer and gardening enthusiast, he looked after this corner together with his wife Carmela for 25 years, making it a haven of peace and conviviality for the neighbourhood.

Thanks to their contribution, this green space now boasts a vegetal set-up that includes many traditional varieties of popular Bolognese gardens, with a prevalence of exotic species, such as a large white-flowered lilac, a Japanese quince shrub (*Chaenomeles x superba*) with a very early flowering, and some palms, the species *Trachycarpus x superba*. In a shadier position, shrubs of *Fatsia japonica*, with its large, glossy green, palmate leaves, grow next to a Japanese medlar tree and an old olive tree. The opposite side, towards the boundary wall that separates this green space from other gardens of similar appearance, is dominated by a large specimen of *Melia azedarach*, or rosary tree, with its characteristic golden yellow fruits when ripe, overshadowing patches of *aspidistra* and *gigaro*. A large globose shrub of *Philadelphus coronarius* with its elegant, fragrant white blossom and a few laurels complete the planting ensemble.