



Savioli Garden - via Savioli, 3

A very short distance from the ancient portico of the Alemanni, outside the gate of Strada Maggiore, we find a garden right next to the Via Emilia, a location that immediately reveals the park's long history.

The entrance gate can be found at no. 3 Via Savioli standing to the right of the old stables of Palazzo Marsigli, now home to the Casa di Quartiere Stella, whose members carefully tend the garden and promote its enhancement. The area was opened to the public in 2018 and contains a few dozen tree specimens, representing the remnants of what was once the 'domestic' ornamental garden of an agricultural estate owned by the Marquises Marsigli-Rossi-Lombardi, a noble Bolognese family centred in Via D'Azeglio.

While the garden was adjacent to the manor house, the countryside stretched southwards towards the hillside, according to an arrangement typical of Bolognese estates featuring a 'country garden': a connecting space between the villa and the cultivated land, filled with ornamental trees, copses and flower beds, and functional elements such as the ice house. Today, the garden has maintained a composition adhering to the fashion of the period, with groupings of species typical of the time.

Past the first large flower beds, showing a Japanese privet and a dense laurel in shrub form, we come to a beautiful meadow clearing introduced by an interesting group of cedars, the predominant botanical genus in the garden, with 13 specimens. The cluster is a 'catalogue' of the three species, juxtaposed and comparable in habit, colouration and needle shape. The cedar of Lebanon, the grandest of the three, with its large horizontal trunks and dark green needle colouration, is found in only one specimen, whereas the Himalayan cedar, the most abundant, has lighter foliage, long, soft needles and young pendulous branches. The Atlas cedar, found here in the glaucous variety, i.e. with blue-green needles, is distinguished by a more ascending branch structure. The central clearing closes towards the west with three 'grandiflora' magnolias, a widespread evergreen in Italian gardens, with large, glossy, leathery deep green leaves.

An unusual presence emerges further away from the main entrance: a small hillock silhouetted against the long rear façade of a large apartment building; this is an ice-house, a snow store, with its small entrance vestibule from the classic two-pitch tiled roof facing north. Above the icehouse soars the bulk of a beautiful oak tree, the typical oak species of the lowlands. The layer of earth covering the iceboxes had an essential insulating function, maintaining an optimal temperature inside the underground chamber and allowing the growth of both tall trees, often spontaneous, and a dense undergrowth, particularly beneficial in the summer to provide shade and prolong the preservation of the stored and pressed snow.

Six panels divided by historical periods have been placed along the northern side of the perimeter wall, telling the story of the people who inhabited this area over a thousand years: centuries of daily life set in the context of Bologna's history with images and documents, most of which have never been seen before. It is precisely in this area that a vine was recently planted, leading to the corner where a special didactic vegetable garden has been set up: aromatic plants, seasonal vegetables, and edible flowers grown in large boxes. ORTI e PORTI is the name given to this space: a permanent workshop that follows the northern European trend of 'shared urban gardens' and seeks to protect the common good.