



## Vegetable Garden Felice Battaglia - via Felice Battaglia 8

Via Felice Battaglia (a twentieth-century philosopher and humanist, former rector of the University of Bologna) follows the valley bottom of the Ravone stream in the last stretch of its hilly course; since the 1970s, the water has been flowing tombed below the road surface until joining Via Saragozza and entering the city. A rectangle of greenery stretches out at the foot of a green slope, set up as a vegetable garden, partly reinstating the agricultural use these lands have inherited for centuries (the area is included in the Ravone estate). The vegetable garden is a short distance from the large park of Villa Benni, enclosed within a large wooded area designated as a public park and another greensward managed by the association *Naturalmente bambini*, dedicated to nature education activities for children and families.

This area, which is entirely fenced off and covers an area of approximately 2000 square metres, was used in 2016 as a vegetable garden with social and horticultural therapy functions. Recently, a large area has been converted to accommodate a sensory garden dedicated to the practice of barefooting, which consists of walking barefoot along a path with different types of materials on the ground. Still little known in Italy, this discipline is linked to plantar reflexology and is oriented towards relaxation and general wellbeing. The design of the path, by the MarsigliLab studio of Bologna, winds through the vegetable garden around four large elliptical flower beds arranged in a cross, ideally recalling four petals of a flower, with a central structure acting as a pivot and focal point. Along this flat path, the experiencer's feet will step on different materials-surfaces (earth, grass, wood, stone, metal, sand, plastic), with the journey ending in a shaded structure for a rest.

Each flowerbed is framed by a mixed border of herbaceous perennials interwoven with small shrubs of cypripedium, nandine, spireas, abelias, sedges, myrtles, currants and cotognastri, while the centre is dominated by a young tree or shrub (lagerstroemia, osmanthus, palm). A variety of aromatic plants, an artichoke grove, a lavender and a few lots of vegetable crops (cabbage, fennel, potatoes) grown organically and alternating with patches of flowers (nigella, soapwort, marigold) rotate over the course of the seasons. On the edge adjacent to Via Felice Battaglia, some tall trees of mirabolano, a species commonly known in the Bolognese area as rusticano, delineate a shady strip leading to the start of the new *barefooting* path.