

# *The Botanical Garden of Lyon in “Le Parc De La Tête D’or”*

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## **Abstract**

It is in the middle of the XIX. Century that the idea of creating a big green area in cities is materialized. In the big apple for instance, it had been really difficult to make accept this idea: the city of New York is narrowed and creating a free place instead of renting expensive flats was seen like a loss of money. Nevertheless, even if people fancied that it would become a place for tramps, dealers and insects, the project had been realized and had a big success. It became fashion to get well dressed to go to walk to the park in family the Sunday, to make picnics etc. Nowadays, parks are the symbol of the relaxation, far from the noise of cars and the pollution. It is a place to rest, and escape of the stress and speed of the working daily life.

*Keywords: Immensity; Rich of Varieties; World Known; Research Center; Thought for the Wellness of People*

## **1. Présentation Of “Le Parc De La Tête D’Or”**

### **1.1. The History**

#### **1.1.1. The Beginning**

From 1812, the project of an urban park started. At this time, scholars saw it as a way to create a park to “give the nature to people who do not have“, to give them a better frame’s life. The place of the area had just been the discording point between the mayor, elected members and architects. At the end, they decided to locate it in the North of the city, close to the Rhone River. The work of the Buhler’s brothers has finally been opened the same year than Central Park, in 1857 [1].

#### **1.1.2. The Progression**

On the beginning, the park was obviously not rich of all the infrastructures and complexes that composed it nowadays.

Some big developments and new constructions have marked the history of the park. In 1861, for instance, new spaces have been created, for the presentation of animals: exotic animals were brought, and more and more, a zoological park had been created. Even if their presence was a part of the beginning plan, they did not see it as consistent as it became. In 1964 the elephants’ enclosure has been built and in 1968, it has been the tour of the giraffes’ pavilion. Other African animals were brought in 2006 and some new species are still coming today to make it richer of varieties (Figure 1) [2].

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Figure 1 [2]

The botanical garden is another example: it had been transferred in 1857 in the park, creating a new activity pole. New greenhouses were built by the architect Gustave Bonnet. Main greenhouses had been re-built between 1877 and 1880.

Nowadays, constructions go on with new varieties still sent there, as the botanical garden is one of the biggest researches centers of the world [1].

The lay out of the lake has also been a big investment. To bring activities and customers, a boating activity has been installed to take profit of the lake. In 1913, a landing stage was added to the infrastructure. On this lake, there are two islands. There were accessible only by boats until 1932 when a tunnel under the lake had been constructed to link one of those called “Swans’ Island” with the rest of the park [1].

## 1.2. Spaces

With its surface of one hundred five hectares, the park follows the English type style. Its big grass areas, hundred years-old ornamental trees, colored and perfumed flowers compo-

sitions, undulating relieves, statues, pavilions give it a romantic atmosphere. It has a triangular shape and it is accessible by eight entrances.

The park is composed to several areas (Figure 2).



Figure 2 [3]

### 1.2.1. Big Grass Areas

They are characterized by this impression of infinity: long perspectives, shadow given by shrubs and trees create a relaxing atmosphere and permit to forget the city and cars still close to the area. The turf is accessible by people, to be laid under the sun or the shadow of a monumental tree, for a family picnic, activities like balls games etc. (Figure 3).

It is accessible by gravel paths and benches permit to the walkers to get rest.



*(Figure 3)*

### 1.2.2. The Lake

With its sixteen hectares [1], the lake is also a big part of the park (Figure 4), bringing water activities, and boat tours. All the surrounding is full of trees, shrubs and flowers: it brings shadow, quietness and intimacy.



*Figure 4*

Swans and ducks swim and children feed them. It is not surrounded by fences so it gives a natural and free impression. Islands are accessible by small boats and tunnels.

### 1.2.3. The Zoological Area

The park is also composed by a zoological space of six hectares, with more than 130 different animals' varieties. Some of them live together in a free area of two and half hectares (Figure 5). Instead of using ugly and imposing fences, architects have used trenches. Animals and human cannot cross them [1].



*Figure 5*

### 1.2.4. The Velodrome

It has been created in 1894 and renovated in 1934. Championships and competitions still take place today, about two or three times a year. In the central place, an athletic area has been laid out, to play handball, volleyball or even basketball [4].

### 1.2.5. Four Rose's Areas

Four different rose's areas are visible in the park.

The first is the collection of the botanical garden, counting about one hundred varieties. Then, there is the historical rose garden created in 1980 in a surface of 1 600 m<sup>2</sup> with more than five hundred seventy different species. There is also an analysis rose garden where you can see all the new varieties and the most beautiful roses of the France. The last one is

the new rose area of five hectares, inaugurated in 1964, counting sixty hundred rosebushes representing the three hundred twenty varieties the most used in France and abroad [5].

## 2. Presentation of the Botanical Garden

The botanical garden is situated on the South-East of the park to keep to big perspectives of the grass area. It is composed by two small parts: first, free entrances and closed greenhouses on the south of the place, and the grass area with its four small gardens, on the North (Figure 6)



Figure 6 [5]

### 2.1. Greenhouses

Known to be one of the biggest research center, the garden can count twenty five greenhouses where plant varieties from the entire world are represented. As the center is also an experience center, only ten of greenhouses are opened to the public and the rest is for researchers and students of the botanical school, link to the garden (Figure 7) [5].



(Figure 7) [5]

Inside of the free entrance greenhouses, architects tried to recreate the atmosphere of the country plants, shrubs, flowers and trees come from with the use of hard landscape like decorative panels or small houses in wood.

We can count Carnivorous plants and from South Africa, Aquatic plants, Madagascar’s greenhouses and arid areas, South America’s plants, Amazon’s greenhouses and a Mexican garden [6].

They are distributed in different greenhouses in function of their needs because they, of course, need to find the same conditions, in mean of moisture, temperature than their coming countries. So, the architecture and structure of greenhouses are adapted to them, in function of the high of trees, the moisture plants need, the temperature, the need of light etc [7].

For example, in the Mexican area, the temperature can be higher than 50°C to keep cac-

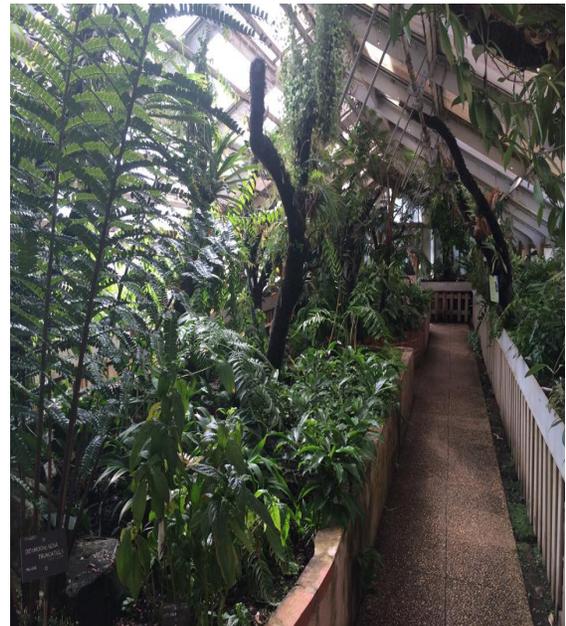
tus alive and the air is really dry [8].

We can also see the hard landscape used with the high structure of the greenhouses with its big glasses permitting to the natural light to come inside. A decorative panel represents the atmosphere of the country to put visitors in this new world. They also use soft landscape to show plants with big stones where they put inside a lot of varieties of cactus (Figure 8).



**Figure 8.** *The ground is hard soil, as we can find in Mexico*

The hard landscape is not used in the same way in other greenhouses. For example, the South America's plants are protected with hard landscape, with fences in glass to forbid visitors to touch. Also, the ceiling height is smaller and it gives another atmosphere, cozier with small trees and shrubs above our heads (Figure 9).



**Figure 9**

Plants need less light but more moisture. The hard landscape with the structure of the greenhouse, fences, and moisture systems serve the soft landscape to recreate the same life conditions to keep alive plants and make them grow in the best way, and to recreate the same landscape to make visitors discover another universe (Figure 10).



**Figure 10**

In all of those greenhouses, landscape architects used the most of varieties of flowers, plants, shrubs and trees they could find, to give atmospheres in function of coming countries. In each greenhouse, all elements added create a whole with the impression to be in Mexico or in the South of Africa. It defines the unity’s principle (Figure 11).



Figure 11

## 2.2. The Garden

The garden is divided in two parts (Figure 12).



Figure 12 [3]

### 2.2.1. The Formal Balance Part

This part of the garden is characterized by its perfect geometry. This result is made thanks to the hard landscape and the soft landscape.

First, thanks to the hard landscape. If you are watching the green houses from the middle of the green area, you can realize that five greenhouses are in the middle of the path (Figure 13).



Figure 13

The main one on the middle of those is the highest and they become smaller and smaller as they become farer and farer from it. It is made in iron and it uses roundness triangular shapes. In front of them, in the middle, there is a statue that gives greatness to the area (Figure 13). The white color reinforces the cleanliness impression.

The soft landscape has also an important role. First, the round shape of the grass made by paths gives a romantically atmosphere. People can lay, picnic, and play on the turf. It is made not only to be beautiful but also to be used for the wellness of the users. We can see annual pyramidal shrubs that are

repeated in a symmetrical way (high, shape and size). Different perennial flowers are used in function of the time. It can be blue bulbs, or like today yellow and pink tulips with blue bulbs. They are also used in the same way in the two identical halves. In the winter, they can let only the shrubs without using flowers. We can also see two identical palms used to put in valor the entrance of the main greenhouse. And finally, there are big trees behind and around infrastructures to keep the intimacy of this charming place (Figure 13).

### 2.2.2. The Informal Balance Part

The informal balance part is composed by four areas. They are equal even if they are really different by the hard landscape and soft landscape used.

#### 2.2.2.1. The Winter's Garden

In this area, landscape architects only used soft landscape. Small green shrubs are used on the small grey gravels to create and surround shapes full of different varieties of colored flowers. The sunny and light area is surrounded by annual ornamental and tick trees to keep the romantically atmosphere of the small garden (Figure 14).



*Figure 14*

The richness of those varieties makes different perfumes, colors, textures and round shapes that create a restful and joyful place. We can see some bulbs, rosebushes, lilies, lavenders.

#### 2.2.2.2. The « Rosaraie »

On the grass area and completed by some shrubs and green plants, the Rosaraie is composed by soft landscape for the most. Red rosebushes are planted in the grass and some others are surrounded by stone ground. We can see the repetition of red, white and orange colors that create a harmony (Figure 15).

To have this result, they used more about two hundreds varieties of roses in those same tones. Hard landscape is also used with big pots where are can see other roses. There are also lamps and lamp posts to create light games and put in valor the area during the night.



*Figure 15*

#### 2.2.2.3. The Shadow's Garden

It is composed by soft landscape in the majority. We can see the grass with some paving stones that create a path. There are also vines

on iron bars that create a cozy place. But the garden found its name with ornamental trees that give shadow for visitors who can sit on the grass and picnic or get rest for a while (Figure 16).

About the hard landscape, we can see pots to hold flowers and a greenhouse in the back.



*Figure 16*

#### **2.2.2.4. The Flowers Garden**

As the Winter garden, they used only soft landscape to create this area. Small shrubs are planted on grey gravels to create and surround shapes that have flowers inside. We can see rectangular shapes for most, and some lines are a little bit rounds, to give smoothness to the whole. They used all the most of colors and textures they could to have something joyful. The place is surrounded by small shrubs and different trees to have different tons of green and different shapes. We can see several varieties of firs, pines. They also use here the informal balance principle with something harmonious even if it is not symmetrical (Figure 17).

This part is the less rich part of the four in mean of varieties. It makes the area simpler.



*Figure 17*

Those 4 parts create the informal balance whole of the botanical garden. Each part is an entire garden with its own characteristics to create a particular world with different atmospheres thanks to the hard landscape like pots, greenhouses, statues and soft landscape with all varieties of plants, flowers, shrubs, trees mixed in functions of their needs for the Plaisir of people coming from the entire world to contemplate it.

### **3. CONCLUSION**

As a conclusion, we can say that the botanical park situated in the South of “Le Parc de la Tête d’Or” is rich in a lot of ways. First, it is one of the biggest searching centers of the world that count an impressive number of varieties of plants, cactus, baobabs etc. Nowadays, they still import new plants so new greenhouses have begun to be built in the example of others, to keep the same atmosphere.

Another particularity of the botanical garden and of the park in general is that all entrances are free for everybody. As the main goal of this area was the creation of a green area

for people who did not have their own green space, it is a necessity to keep it free. Some activities like boats and food's kiosk permit to collect money for lays out and works.

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