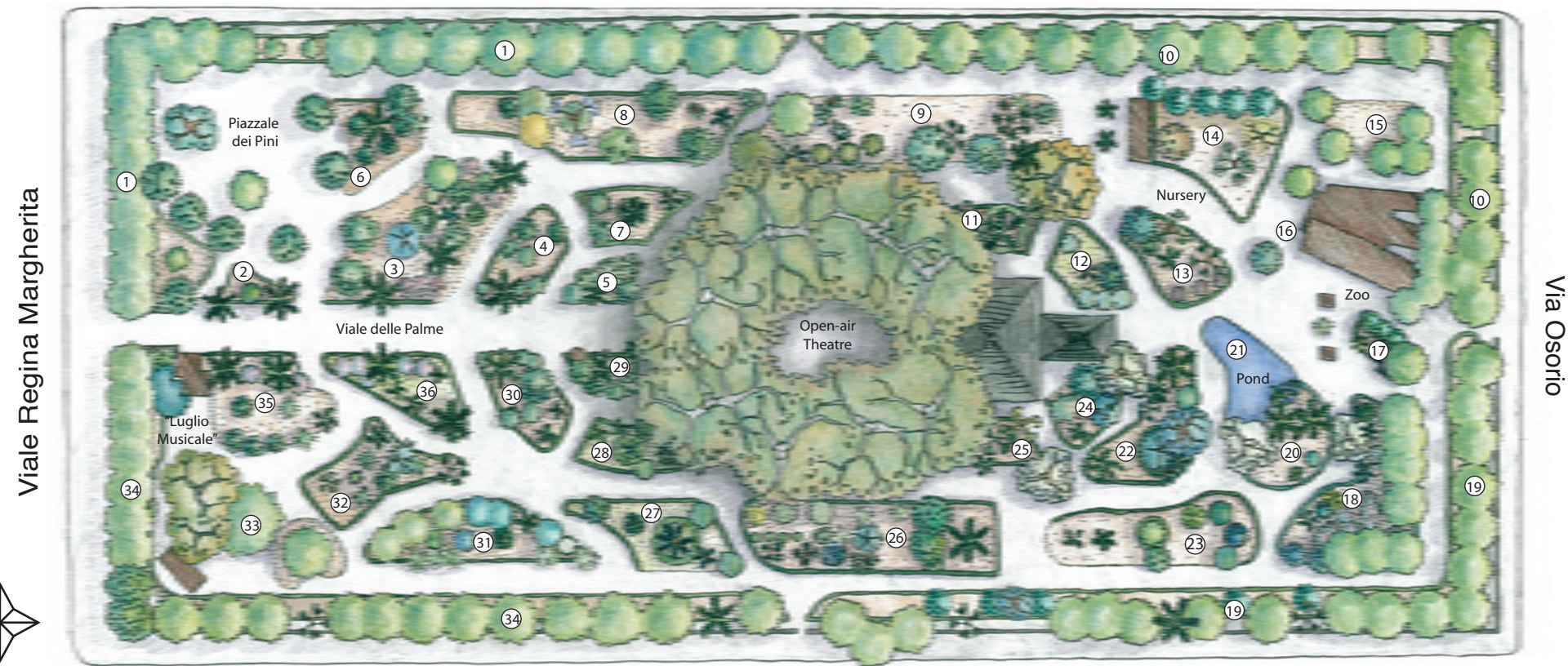


Sector I

Via Spalti

Sector II



Sector IV

Via Palmerio Abate

Sector III

A BRIEF HISTORY

The origins of the Villa Margherita date back to the years immediately following the unification of Italy, a period in which a plan to enlarge the city to the east was put into effect. Villa Margherita was built where a moat previously existed, situated between the *Castello Argonese* more commonly known as *Castello di Terra* and the Osorio Gate, known as *Porta Pali*, defending the walls separating the city from its hinterlands. In 1878, during the administration of the Mayor Enrico Fardella the first tree planting took place, beginning the construction of the public garden. The park was opened to the public sometime between 1889 and 1890, during the administration of Mayor Nunzio Aula, and was dedicated to the Queen Margherita of Savoy, the first Queen of Italy.

THE VILLA MARGHERITA TODAY

The rectangular garden runs along a North-South axis and has four entrances, one on every side. The main entrance from Viale Regina Margherita opens onto a central pathway that leads to an open-air theatre in the Piazzale dei Ficus. The fulcrum of the garden, this captivating performance space takes advantage of the natural landscape as a backdrop and the shaded area covered by several *Ficus macrophylla* subsp. *columnaris* as a space that, during performances organized by "Luglio Musicale," can hold an audience of up to 2500 people. Since 1948 the Villa Margherita has conducted an annual opera season, initiated by the passionate activity of the Maestro Giovanni De Santis. Every year since then various operas have been performed here featuring artists of international fame. Behind the theatre's stage, one can admire an elegant pond that along with the winding paths between the planting beds, creates a place of contemplation that is only disturbed by the calls of the resident birdlife. In the pond you can find follies which affectionately represent the history of the city. For example, the 5 columns with Doric capitals were part of the Garibaldi theatre, destroyed by wartime bombing. Enriched by a fountain and by aquatic and subtropical plants, the whole area is enlivened by birds, in particular by various types of fowl. The planting beds are lined by borders and hedges of mock orange and asparagus fern. Benches and lampposts mark the pathways. Marble busts representing some of the most illustrious people from Trapani's history are, for the most part, found inside the plant beds

PON project "Abilities for Development"
"scuolarisaterritorio"
Mod. "Let's turn the Villa Margherita into a
Botanical Garden"

F-1-FSE-2007-921

With the contribution of the City of Trapani
Dep. of Public Education and Dep. of Territory and Environment

I. C. "Livio Bassi" Trapani
"Buscaino Campo" branch
Scolastic year 2007/2008

Principal: *Prof. Michele Aleo*

Students: *classes I G and III G*

Teachers: *Francesca Vaccari, Caterina Gucciardi*

Collaborating Teachers: *Francesco Cocco, Caterina Daidone,*
Francesca Giacalone

Scientific consultation: *Dr. Manlio Speciale, Curator of the*
Orto botanico di Palermo

Base plan : *Arch. Mariella Romano*

Drawings, layout and translation: *Cassandra Funsten*

Photos: *Francesco Cocco, Pino Grispo, Mariella Romano,*
Francesca Vaccari

General Information

VILLA MARGHERITA
Viale Regina Margherita, Trapani

Free admission. Open to the public
all year including holidays.

Hours of operation:

September - October 8:00 am - 8:00 pm

November - March 8:00 am - 5:00 pm

April - June 8:00 am - 8:00 pm

July - August 8:00- 10:00 pm

(excepting days with a performance by "Luglio Musicale")

Contacts

Dep. of Territory and Environment
Tel. 0923-590736 from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm

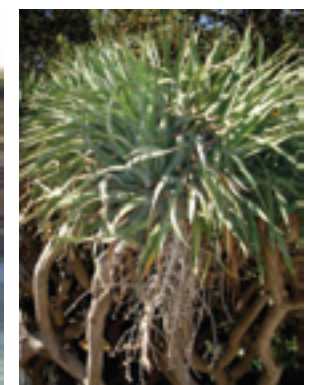
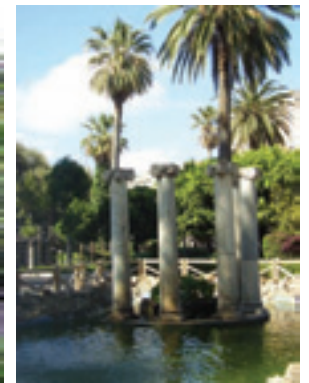
Gardener's office
Tel. 0923-590392 from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm



Istituto Comprensivo "Livio Bassi"
Trapani



VILLA
MARGHERITA



ENGLISH



A BOTANIC WALK THROUGH THE VILLA

The villa, as you can see in the plan, is subdivided into four sectors, each of which is made up of plant beds of various sizes and forms. Each bed has been assigned a corresponding number demarcated in this text in parentheses. From the main entrance



Viale delle Palme

we enter a pathway lined by splendid century-old Canary Island date palms (*Phoenix canariensis*). Some of their stems are covered by a rich spiral of Algerian ivy (*Hedera helix*). This subtropical palm flowers in spring and bears fruit in autumn. Its quite ornamental fruits are small dates that range in colour from yellow to dark ochre. At the beginning of the pathway, on each side, we find two potted female specimens of sagu palm (*Cycas revoluta*). They can be identified by their characteristic "inflorescence," a yellowish fuzz in which the plants light-orange, unprotected ovules can be seen. To the left, in Sector I, a piazza with many pine trees (*Pinus halepensis*) opens up. In bed (3) we can note a majestic Norfolk Island pine (*Araucaria heterophylla*). As its name suggests, this tree is native to the island of Norfolk and has a very regular geometric structure. In the same bed, we can admire oleander bushes (*Nerium oleander*), an oleaster (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*), and many mock oranges (*Pittosporum tobira*), two of which are splendid centenarians. The oleander is a typical Mediterranean plant, known for its poisonous properties since the time of the Ancient Greeks and Romans. It blooms from May on bearing flowers arranged in ample corymbs that emit an intense perfume. The resulting fruit is a dark brown elongated follicle. The oleaster, a little known tree, is very similar to our own olive but is deciduous. The branches are covered by a silver patina and the highly



Pittosporum tobira inflorescence

fragrant small yellow flowers produce edible yellow berries. Used throughout the city as a hedge, the mock orange has an abundant bloom, a particularly shiny leaf, and is evergreen. In another bed (4) that borders the central pathway, topiaries of bougainvillea (*Bougainvillea glabra*) and a small *Meryta denhamii* can be observed. On the left (8) we find three trees quite different from one another which are worth our attention: *Parkinsonia aculeata*, with a greenish trunk and branches and small yellow flowers with orange spots, *Jacaranda mimosifolia*, with soft dark green foliage and tubular blue-violet flowers, and *Yucca elephantipes* an evergreen plant from the *Agavaceae* family whose stem typically has an enlarged base that resembles an elephant's foot. Two beds close sector I. In the first (5), we find the famous Mediterranean fan palm (*Chamaerops humilis*), a palm native to Europe that grows spontaneously throughout the Mediterranean region. It has rigid, fan-shaped leaves held by long spiny petioles. In addition, there is a carpet of *Canna indica*, with its lovely foliage and attractive yellow flowers with orange veins. In the second (7), we can admire another species of palm tree: *Livistona chinensis*. This elegant palm has large fan-shaped leaves with long pendulous fronds. At the end of the *Viale delle Palme*, we come to a large area graced by the shade and the mysterious atmosphere created by majestic specimens of Morton Bay fig (*Ficus macrophylla* subsp. *columnaris*), whose crowns interweave and whose branches bear aerial roots that fuse together forming impressive columns. During the summer, this space is used as an outdoor theatre. Continuing on to the left, we come to sector II. In bed (9) we can observe two Indian laurel trees (*Ficus microcarpa*). This tree is used throughout Trapani and inside this same villa, where there are 102 specimens, 76 of which line the garden's perimeter. In the same bed we can admire an exuberant karaka tree



carpet of *Canna indica*

fragrant small yellow flowers produce edible yellow berries. Used throughout the city as a hedge, the mock orange has an abundant bloom, a particularly shiny leaf, and is evergreen. In another bed (4) that borders the central pathway, topiaries of bougainvillea (*Bougainvillea glabra*) and a small *Meryta denhamii* can be observed. On the left (8) we find three trees quite different from one another which are worth our attention: *Parkinsonia aculeata*, with a greenish trunk and branches and small yellow flowers with orange spots, *Jacaranda mimosifolia*, with soft dark green foliage and tubular blue-violet flowers, and *Yucca elephantipes* an evergreen plant from the *Agavaceae* family whose stem typically has an enlarged base that resembles an elephant's foot. Two beds close sector I. In the first (5), we find the famous Mediterranean fan palm (*Chamaerops humilis*), a palm native to Europe that grows spontaneously throughout the Mediterranean region. It has rigid, fan-shaped

leaves held by long spiny petioles. In addition, there is a carpet of *Canna indica*, with its lovely foliage and attractive yellow flowers with orange veins. In the second (7), we can admire another species of palm tree: *Livistona chinensis*. This elegant palm has large fan-shaped leaves with long pendulous fronds. At the end of the *Viale delle Palme*, we come to a large area graced by the shade and the mysterious atmosphere created by majestic specimens of Morton Bay fig (*Ficus macrophylla* subsp. *columnaris*), whose crowns interweave and whose branches bear aerial roots that fuse together forming impressive columns. During the summer, this space is used as an outdoor theatre. Continuing on to the left, we come to sector II. In bed (9) we can observe two Indian laurel trees (*Ficus microcarpa*). This tree is used throughout Trapani and inside this same villa, where there are 102 specimens, 76 of which line the garden's perimeter. In the same bed we can admire an exuberant karaka tree



Corynocarpus laevigata

fragrant small yellow flowers produce edible yellow berries. Used throughout the city as a hedge, the mock orange has an abundant bloom, a particularly shiny leaf, and is evergreen. In another bed (4) that borders the central pathway, topiaries of bougainvillea (*Bougainvillea glabra*) and a small *Meryta denhamii* can be observed. On the left (8) we find three trees quite different from one another which are worth our attention: *Parkinsonia aculeata*, with a greenish trunk and branches and small yellow flowers with orange spots, *Jacaranda mimosifolia*, with soft dark green foliage and tubular blue-violet flowers, and *Yucca elephantipes* an evergreen plant from the *Agavaceae* family whose stem typically has an enlarged base that resembles an elephant's foot. Two beds close sector I. In the first (5), we find the famous Mediterranean fan palm (*Chamaerops humilis*), a palm native to Europe that grows spontaneously throughout the Mediterranean region. It has rigid, fan-shaped leaves held by long spiny petioles. In addition, there is a carpet of *Canna indica*, with its lovely foliage and attractive yellow flowers with orange veins. In the second (7), we can admire another species of palm tree: *Livistona chinensis*. This elegant palm has large fan-shaped leaves with long pendulous fronds. At the end of the *Viale delle Palme*, we come to a large area graced by the shade and the mysterious atmosphere created by majestic specimens of Morton Bay fig (*Ficus macrophylla* subsp. *columnaris*), whose crowns interweave and whose branches bear aerial roots that fuse together forming impressive columns. During the summer, this space is used as an outdoor theatre. Continuing on to the left, we come to sector II. In bed (9) we can observe two Indian laurel trees (*Ficus microcarpa*). This tree is used throughout Trapani and inside this same villa, where there are 102 specimens, 76 of which line the garden's perimeter. In the same bed we can admire an exuberant karaka tree



Chorisia speciosa

(*Corynocarpus laevigata*), a plant native to New Zealand with leaves arranged in a characteristic rosette pattern, bushes of Californian geranium (*Senecio petasitis*), an herbaceous plant native to Mexico, a Persian silk tree (*Albizia julibrissin*), an ornamental used for its delicate foliage and lovely fragrant flowers and finally, two yucca specimens (*Yucca elephantipes*). In bed (13), a tree whose common name is the floss silk tree in English and "the bottle tree" in Italian (*Chorisia speciosa*) deserves our particular attention. Native to tropical America, it is distinguished by its enlarged trunk covered by fat spines. It has sizable flowers and fruit made up of capsules that pop open when ripe, freeing an abundant fluff similar to kapok. In the same bed another palm (*Washingtonia filifera*) makes its home alongside pruned bushes of bougainvillea (*Bougainvillea glabra*). Following the pathway between the aforementioned beds, we arrive at the nursery (14). Here, numerous plants are cultivated in both pots and in the ground including: magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*), Judas tree (*Cercis siliquastrum*), black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) and the pyramid tree (*Lagunaria patersonii*). The magnolia is an ancient plant that is considered one of the first angiosperms present on Earth. This particular species is native to America, and is cultivated exclusively for ornamental use. Its leaves are evergreen, and its white velvety flowers emit an intense perfume. It blooms from May on, grows very slowly and can only bloom after it is 20 years old. The Judas tree is native to Asia minor, and comes from the legume family. The flowers that appear between March and May are edible. The black locust is native to northern America, and was introduced into Italy in the 1800's. It is cultivated both for ornamental use and to improve the soil. The leaves are



Lagunaria patersonii flower

compost. The flowers are fragrant, white and held together in racemes. The pyramid tree is an impressive Australian tree that resembles a giant hibiscus. At the end of sector II, in the piazza next to the animal cages that we come across heading to the right, we find a specimen of *Ficus elastica* and further ahead, next to the bird cages, an oleander (*Nerium oleander*). Behind the oleander, in sector III, next to the gardeners' office, in bed (17) stands another imposing pyramid tree (*Lagunaria patersonii*). To the right we find a spacious bed (18) that holds a centenarian plane tree (*Platanus orientalis*), along with a locust tree, bay laurel, and karaka tree. In addition, we can observe a beach she-oak (*Casuarina equisetifolia*), which is similar to a pine tree, and an *Erythrina caffra*, with its spectacular coral-red bloom. Behind the pond, in a small bed (20) next to the plane tree stands a banana (*Musa xparadisiaca*) beneath a Canary Island date palm. In addition, we can find taro here, as well as another specimen inside the pond, (*Colocasia antiquorum*) and wild papyrus (*Cyperus alternifolius*). In another bed (22) overlooking the pond there are three cycads (*Cycas revoluta*), an *Araucaria columnaris*, a holm oak (*Quercus ilex*), an evergreen tree typical to Mediterranean forests, and a *Hibiscus arnottianus*, which has lovely pink flowers. In the bed to the left (23), amongst the other plants, the typically white trumpet-shaped flowers of *Brugmansia cornigera* are of particular note along with another *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* "Flore-Pleno" with red flowers. To the right we come across a small bed (24) with a kentia palm (*Howea forsteriana*), and some more karaka trees (*Corynocarpus laevigata*). Next to these, in bed (25), are a few previously noted plants including: *Chorisia speciosa*,



Colocasia antiquorum

compost. The flowers are fragrant, white and held together in racemes. The pyramid tree is an impressive Australian tree that resembles a giant hibiscus. At the end of sector II, in the piazza next to the animal cages that we come across heading to the right, we find a specimen of *Ficus elastica* and further ahead, next to the bird cages, an oleander (*Nerium oleander*). Behind the oleander, in sector III, next to the gardeners' office, in bed (17) stands another imposing pyramid tree (*Lagunaria patersonii*). To the right we find a spacious bed (18) that holds a centenarian plane tree (*Platanus orientalis*), along with a locust tree, bay laurel, and karaka tree. In addition, we can observe a beach she-oak (*Casuarina equisetifolia*), which is similar to a pine tree, and an *Erythrina caffra*, with its

spectacular coral-red bloom. Behind the pond, in a small bed (20) next to the plane tree stands a banana (*Musa xparadisiaca*) beneath a Canary Island date palm. In addition, we can find taro here, as well as another specimen inside the pond, (*Colocasia antiquorum*) and wild papyrus (*Cyperus alternifolius*). In another bed (22) overlooking the pond there are three cycads (*Cycas revoluta*), an *Araucaria columnaris*, a holm oak (*Quercus ilex*), an evergreen tree typical to Mediterranean forests, and a *Hibiscus arnottianus*, which has lovely pink flowers. In the bed to the left (23), amongst the other plants, the typically white trumpet-shaped flowers of *Brugmansia cornigera* are of particular note along with another *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* "Flore-Pleno" with red flowers. To the right we come across a small bed (24) with a kentia palm (*Howea forsteriana*), and some more karaka trees (*Corynocarpus laevigata*). Next to these, in bed (25), are a few previously noted plants including: *Chorisia speciosa*,



Musa xparadisiaca

specimen of *Duranta plumieri* with an unusually woven trunk, *Cestrum parquii* and *Dracaena draco*. This last species typically has a dichotomous branching structure, decorative flowers held together in green panicles and small round berries, which become light red at maturity. In sector IV, divided as usual into various beds, aside from various plants we have already observed, we come across two specimens of *Brachychiton discolor* (27 and 28), and a few birds of paradise (*Strelitzia reginae*) (28) in the center of a border made up of *Euonymus japonicus* "Variegatus." In bed (31), a large specimen of *Phoenix dactylifera* stands. It can be distinguished from the other species present in the garden, *P. canariensis*, by its thinner stem and sparser crown of glaucous leaves. In bed (32), we find two splendid specimens of *Furcraea selloa* var. *marginata*, a tree-formed agavaceae with a stem that can reach 2 m, and *Sabal bermudana*, an American palm with large fan-shaped leaves. At the end of sector IV, behind the headquarters of "Luglio Musicale", we can admire two gigantic specimens of *Ficus macrophylla* subsp. *columnaris* and two centenarian *Ficus microcarpa* (33). Following the perimeter of the bed, (35) we return to the *Viale delle Palme*. Here, before finishing our itinerary, in bed (30) we can observe an exuberant specimen of *Meryta denhamii*, with its umbrella structure and long leathery lute-shaped leaves.

Chamaerops humilis, *Meryta denhamii*, *Livistona chinensis*, and *Washingtonia filifera*. On the left, in bed (26) which follows the perimeter of the garden and closes sector III, we come across some new species: *Tecomaria capensis*, a



Fructing *Dracaena draco*

specimen of *Duranta plumieri* with an unusually woven trunk, *Cestrum parquii* and *Dracaena draco*. This last species typically has a dichotomous branching structure, decorative flowers held together in green panicles and small round berries, which become light red at maturity. In sector IV, divided as usual into various beds, aside from various plants we have already observed, we come across two specimens of *Brachychiton discolor* (27 and 28), and a few birds of paradise (*Strelitzia reginae*) (28) in the center of a border made up of *Euonymus japonicus* "Variegatus." In bed (31), a large specimen of *Phoenix dactylifera* stands. It can be distinguished from the other species present in the garden, *P. canariensis*, by its thinner stem and sparser crown of glaucous leaves. In bed (32), we find two splendid specimens of *Furcraea selloa* var. *marginata*, a tree-formed agavaceae with a stem that can reach 2 m, and *Sabal bermudana*, an American palm with large fan-shaped leaves. At the end of sector IV, behind the



inflorescence of *Meryta denhamii*

headquarters of "Luglio Musicale", we can admire two gigantic specimens of *Ficus macrophylla* subsp. *columnaris* and two centenarian *Ficus microcarpa* (33). Following the perimeter of the bed, (35) we return to the *Viale delle Palme*. Here, before finishing our itinerary, in bed (30) we can observe an exuberant specimen of *Meryta denhamii*, with its umbrella structure and long leathery lute-shaped leaves.

